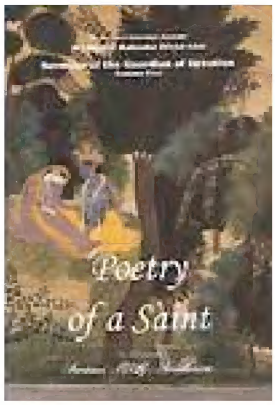
Sri Sri Guru Gauranga Jayatah!

Poetry of a Saint

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Divya-vani

Sermons of the Guardian of Devotion

Volume Five



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Introduction

The Divine Realm of the Soul

Our real home is an abundance of freedom and comfort. It is a place where there is a natural transaction of faith, love, and affection. It is inconceivable. The scriptures say, "Do not venture to test the unthinkable plane with your reasoning. That plane really is beyond the capacity of your thought. It is under a different set of laws. Your mathematical calculations and conclusions in this world are acquainted with points, planes, and solids. At present you are a man in the world of solids, and you have some limited association with planes and points in a somewhat abstract way. Therefore, how can you calculate higher things of which you have no knowledge? The ways of living and the laws of that domain are all unknown to you, so you should not try to debate that. That plane is of quite a different nature. Do not rush to bring within your experimental laboratory, those items which are beyond the capacity of your thinking. That would be pure foolishness."

Higher things do exist, but the general man in this world has no knowledge about them. We are men of experience and have some knowledge, but only to a particular degree and standard. We cannot venture to calculate what is beyond our reach in this three-dimensional world. But if those who actually have experience of that plane will come to us and give us some information, then we can make some comparison: "This gentleman of a particular experience of ether has written in this way, another gentleman who has experience and has also experimented about ether has written in another particular manner." In this way we can gain some understanding from their investigation and their real connection with the subject matter.

In this section of those investigating telescopes, we can make a comparison of their findings. The experience of one researcher with his telescope is of a certain type, and we can also learn about the experience of others with their particular telescopes. With the information available to us from their actual connection with the telescopes and their experiments, we may be able to conclude that perhaps a certain telescope was more powerful, another more powerful in a particular field. So, we have some limited capacity to compare what has been discovered beyond our senses by means of the telescope – even though we ourselves may not have a telescope.

The subject of the higher things discovered by the mental "telescope", or soul's "telescope", has been dealt with in the revealed scriptures. Such subject matter is known by the saints, and we are to take their help in order to have entrance within that land. We are not at present in a position to have experience of the higher plane. However, later, by the help of the saints and sacred scriptures, when we shall ourselves have that type of telescope, we shall be able to have such a higher experience.

Do not let the argumentative spirit overshadow everything. Argument is not all in all: it is not that it must be the resort of every belief. The spiritual realm is inconceivable, but still we are to try to understand things according to our capacity, faith, and realization. Above all, we have to accommodate within our minds, that sweetness is sweet, and truth is truth – however strong it may be. But one word of caution is in order: we should not take any standard from here and apply it to that higher realm.

If one has no eyes but another can see, the blind man will naturally seek help from the one who has vision. We are also blind to what is within ourselves. Otherwise, what is the necessity of consulting a doctor? The doctor can see what we cannot: he will diagnose and then we will undergo treatment. Naturally we shall have respect and will give him something for his assistance. It is not unreasonable.

The divine guide or bona fide guru is the specialist doctor, and we shall understand his or her qualification when we come to see that what he or she says is real – and not imaginary. Such vision will depend upon the degree of awakening of the eye. If one who is blind is treated by a capable doctor, he will gradually directly perceive, "Yes, I begin to see something. I now have some eye experience." From that time on, he will not care for the speculative opinions of the other blind people, but he will have his direct capacity to see. With the coming of sight, he can understand that the application of the medicine has had some real effect.

Scientific understanding is also similar. In earlier days when Faraday discovered electricity, many people laughed. "What is this? It is mere curiosity. What utility can we derive from this electricity?"

I once read an account of Faraday demonstrating an experiment to show the effect of his discovery. He generated electricity with a machine and then he showed small pieces of paper being moved by that electric current. Many were satisfied to see his new discovery, but then a lady remarked, "But after all this, Mr. Faraday, what practical benefit shall we derive from this luxury play of yours?"

Faraday replied, "Madam, can you please tell me what is the utility of a newborn babe?" His point was that when a baby is born we are to take care of him. Then, when grown, his energy will be put to work usefully. Similarly, some consider that God consciousness is only a luxury, a fashion, or like playing, i.e. that it has no practical application or direct utility.

But when God consciousness becomes intense, those who experience it will see that all other activities, however apparently important, have no permanent value. Why? Because ultimately we want to live. We don't want to die. To live is the main necessity and the general necessity of us all. No one can deny that they want to live. And not only live, but live happily, properly, and consciously. Furthermore, we want to avoid all affliction and misery. When God consciousness arises within someone, he can see clearly. "Why is everyone engaged in a wild goose chase in this material world? Everyone wants happiness, but all are running after an imaginary phantasmagoria."

Happiness can never be produced from mortal things. We are making a transaction with the mortal world, but that cannot bring satisfaction: it can only lose our energy. What we collect on one side, disappears on another. A person should neither accept nor tolerate this sort of waste of energy as the principle of life. Such a wise person can see another plane of life. They can see that they are not a party to this mortal world that is like the domain of a playground. They will feel. "I am immortal. I am a member of the eternal world, but I have somehow become entangled in this mortal aspect of existence. So, as soon as I can shake off this connection, I shall then stand in my proper, normal position."

They will find that they themselves – the soul, the feeler, the conceiver – is a member of another soil but they have become entangled within this mortal pain-producing world. Yet still, with the strength of their realization, they can make improvement in their progress to the immortal plane. As proof positive comes before us we shall feel sure, "Now I see these things and hear these things, and this experience is so much more real than the world about me. The world is vague, but what I now see and hear is more real than that."

A direct transaction is possible with the soul, with God, and with God's land. Where we are presently living is the plane of indirect transactions: first the eye, ear, and other senses collect experience, then it goes to the mind before we can have experience of this world. But in the case of the soul, we feel everything directly ourselves without the help of any instrument, without the intervention of an intermediary.

Through the microscope we see one thing, and through the naked eye we see something else. There is a difference. Through the eye, ear, nose and tongue we have some experience of this world, but concerning the soul, if we can withdraw from the "progress" in the negative side, we shall be able to feel, "Oh! This is the nature of the soul." We shall directly feel who we are without the help of any instrument. So, ironically, hopelessness here in this mortal realm is a prerequisite to hope in the divine realm.

The soul can see himself, he can focus upon himself and through introspection, he will realize his own innate nature. Through the process of introspection, the soul – without the help of any other instrument – will perceive all possible conceptions of himself directly. He will then understand his own soil: he will gain the conception of a higher type of soil. On that positive side he will discover: "I do not die."

The material plane is the plane of misrepresentation and misunderstanding, but in the higher plane there is no misunderstanding. Once admitted there, our conception, though it may be partial, will be clear and true. Anyone having that experience will be convinced and he will be determined to go forward.

Socrates could feel that the soul was immortal. He was so intense with his feeling that he did not give any value to his own life in this mundane world. He neglectfully disconnected himself from this world because, with great conviction, he knew the soul to be immortal. Jesus also was so much convinced of his Lord that he did not give any care for the happiness and pleasures of this world: he neglectfully rejected it all.

There are many things invisible to this fleshy eye that are visible with the eye of knowledge. We can concede that the eye of knowledge can see many things that the fleshy eye cannot. Similarly, a deep vision exists by which we can see things in a different, more hopeful way: "Come and see!"

An eye cannot see when it is covered by cataract: but when the cataract is removed, the eye can see. Ignorance is like a cataract in our eye that causes us blindness. Our vision is only superficial, but deeper vision can see many things. This eye backed by the eye of knowledge can see many things – deeper and deeper. Our apparent sight has no value. Real value is

present in the seer who can see with deeper vision. And all are not equal: there are the wise, the wiser, and even the wiser still. There is gradation, and according to his capacity, the seer will see.

It is easy to see that at present we are members of this mortal world: but by what are we connected? It is our body that is the member. If we can go above the body we can go to the mind, then on to the intelligence, then to the soul. We shall find that the plane where the souls live is eternal, and the soul himself is also eternal. From there we can go on to search after the Supersoul, the origin of all our thoughts.

The Supersoul is likened to the sun that is the origin of all rays of light. These rays or particles of light are the individual souls – to which we belong. Once we find a ray of light we can approach the sun from which all rays emanate. Similarly, from the conception of our own selves, knowing ourselves to be particles of consciousness, we can search out a plane of super-consciousness, super-knowledge, and super-existence. In this way we can progress to the Ultimate Cause, the Source from which everything flows. But we cannot go just according to our own whim and minute freedom. Some sort of help and guidance from that plane is indispensably necessary. Such help comes in the form of guru, the Vaisnavas, and other agents of that land. With their help, we can make honest progress towards the goal.

At present we are like monarchs of all we survey, but what we survey is all transient, mortal, and reactionary. What is pleasing today will later turn into pain, therefore we must seek a good position somewhere else, a good place to build our home elsewhere. In the course of that search we shall find that we do have our own home, and it is all-perfect.

In the beginning, we may think that we shall be going to some unknown quarter: "Innumerable living entities are here around me in my present world, but where I am now trying to go, that is uncertain. It seems imaginary and abstract." However, when we begin our journey we shall gradually find that almost all existence is in that side, the side where all are truthful. We shall find that this material side is very meagre and limited, and here there is only a tiny representation of the truth.

From here, we may think that most of the existing universe is ensconced here and only a very few special souls go from here to the immortal world such as Socrates, Mohammed, and Buddha. But gradually we shall come to understand that the higher world is infinitely greater than the mundane portion we see here. We shall gradually come to understand that, as in a country, a few people are confined to a hospital or a prison and are suffering. Similarly, a paltry few persons are here in this mundane plane to be rectified. As this becomes clearer to us, we shall feel more courage to proceed, and with greater speed we shall run towards our home. Let us go home, and the nearer we are to home, our speed will increase more and more, "Oh. This is my homeland!"

At present, we are outside and our mind is also focused outside. We are helplessly moving. Our hope lies only in the grace of the divine agents. They come to pick us up and warn us. "What are you doing? Do not go on that side. It is the land of danger, the land of death. Come along with me. I shall take you to the land of eternal nectar."

Those agents come to arouse us from our slumber, our ignorant madness. They are the Vaisnavas, and they have also given the Vedas that give some history of the divine realm and of the saints who have gone there. Through the scriptures, our faith will gradually develop and we shall increasingly keep association with the saints. In so doing, we shall make ever more quickly, intense progress towards our true domicile.

"Home, back to God, back to home – sweet, sweet home." This sort of feeling we shall find within us if we are fortunate to be allowed a little participation by the grace of the canvassers of that land – the agents of the Lord, the messengers of love divine. We shall be taken to that proper soil and we shall gain some solid familiar type of conception of what our real home is like. In this way we shall progress to that side.

Chapter One

Pillars of Faith

The Heart-Light of Faith

"Faith is our only hope. One who endeavours to acquire faith always looks for the association of the faithful. As one fire-light lights another without diminution in the same way faith – the light in the heart of a devotee – enhances another devotee's heart-light."

The light-ray of Faith

The devotion in the heart of a devotee goes to develop the same faith or devotion in another devotee's heart, i.e. sadhu-sanga. We can enhance our faith by association with the saints – the devotees of the Lord. We may ask, "By what means?" If I chance to connect with the saints (*sadhus*), then a light-ray of faith in their hearts will come to develop my faith. In this way, sadhu and sastra come to help us: firstly through the living saints and secondly, the passive saints in the form of scriptures and sacred books containing that knowledge. However, the association of the devotees who have got "fire" in their spirit is immeasurably stronger.
What is the nature of that faith? That faith is in the surrender to the Absolute will. That Absolute Will then manifests Himself within as the Super-subject, the Supersoul or the Oversoul. That fine Super-subjective existence can come down to this gross plane. However, we cannot make Him the object of our sensual inspection. Our experience here is inadequate to make any judgement or understand that higher Super-subjective existence.

The Descent of Divine Current

The Super-subject, the Over-soul, descends to reveal Himself to the *jiva* soul. The *jiva* soul perceives the higher, heretofore inconceivable experience – within his consciousness. When the Super-subject withdraws Himself, then the *jiva* has only the recollection of that experience. This is the ontological development of faith in that Super-subjective Existential World.
Krsna is Super-subjective. In comparison, we are very gross. Being unlimited, the Super-subject can approach and commit Himself but we find ourselves unable to approach Him with our own demands. We are depending on the Lord's Sweet Will for His Divine Connection. That is our position. If He does not come to us, then we are nowhere.
So, surrendering – and not by any other means – by developing our negative side, our hunger, we are able to draw the Lord's attention toward our paltry selves. In this way, we can pray to have His connection. I have got no right to think that He will come within my grasp, by my will. This is not possible. Absolute Independence, Absolute Freedom and Absolute Initiative is there in Him. Then, how can we have His association? It is only by increasing our negative side through thirst and intense prayer that, "My Lord, I am needy. I hanker for Your divine connection." In this way, our prayer may reach that plane and He may fulfil our need. Our connection is only possible in this manner – by deeply understanding and developing our negative side. Only then have we got some prospect in this life – and not otherwise.

Surrender, devotion, serving temperament

The negative side is aspiring to surrender wholesale at the Lord's disposal. Those devotees think, "It is the Lord's Sweet Will that we can be utilized for His own purpose." In this way it is by our faith that our own self-determination to surrender to His Divine Will reaches the Lord and this transaction gives chance for the jiva to be utilized by the Supreme Himself. On the whole, the negative can attract the positive. That capacity is there. So, surrender, devotion, serving temperament and offering everything to the Lord – that has got its intrinsic value. It is not assertive; it is dependent. Still, in the Absolute Realm, it has got some real value. It is not without value. It does not go unrecognized. In the Srimad Bhagavatam (9.4.63), the Lord says:

aham bhakta-paradhino, hy asvatantra iva dvija
sadhubhir grasta-hrdayo bhaktair bhakta-jana-priyah

"Although I am free, I still feel as if I am subordinate to My devotee's affection. My devotee surrenders everything and expects nothing in return without My sanction. How can I not give Myself to such surrender? Although constitutionally I am free – still, their attraction, affection, earnestness, sincerity and dependence captures Me. Attracted by My devotee's love, I offer Myself at their behest."

The corresponding side is like that. But in the Absolute sense, He is free and we are always dependent.
The Potency is dependent on – is owned by – the Potent, the substance. Substance and Potency are co-related, in fact, inseparable. We say that Substance is the main Subject and Potency is dependent on Him.
This is the conception in the normal state of existence. And the *jiva* is part and parcel of His Potency. So, constitutionally, we are dependent on His mercy.

The Zone of Dedication

We want affinity in intimacy with gurudeva, and it is he who has the connection with the Centre – with the Substance. If I can maintain a bona fide relationship with *Gurudeva*, then automatically I shall get Him. This is also there. In a bona fide negative position, the devotees have also got their attraction to draw the Lord towards them and vice-versa. But presently, we are outside that zone. We are to enter that zone of dedication and proper transaction with *Gurudeva*.

prati anga lagi kande, prati anga mora
(Jnana Dasa, in his *Vaisnava-padavali* "Anthology of Vaisnava Songs")

"Every atom of one spiritual body is the Negative for every atom of the Positive. Every atom of the Absolute Counterpart (The Potency) is crying to be united with the corresponding atom of The Potent Himself."
Radha-Krsna comprise the negative-positive represented wholesale. One is Beauty Personified and Another, is absorbing that Beauty and distributing it to others.

Sri Chaitanyadev is both Radha and Krsna combined. He is Krsna in the mood of Radha searching for Himself both Positive-Negative combined. Sri Sankara and others say this combination produces equilibrium, but in Vaisnava philosophy, this equilibrium is dynamic. The Positive is searching for Himself in the mood of the Negative – serving His own Positive Self. In this way the Positive, Sri Krsna is distributed to the public in the mood of the Negative, Sri Radha. This is Sri Chaitanyadev personified. The higher, closer associates of the Lord disclose to us such impressions. We will be able to understand according to the intensity of our faith.

The importance of Faith

Faith is the only instrument by which we the finite can measure the Infinite. All other methods are futile – useless. Faith is the widest substance within us. It is not imagination. Faith can carry us a long way. Faith has got a tangible position within us. When we disconnect from all phases of knowledge and experience then we can live only in the plane of faith. When all the wealth of our experience – the whole world of our experience – finally retires and wholesale dissolution ensues then we shall find faith is there dutifully attending us. This is the innate nature of the soul. It is fundamental.
The dissolution of the body, mind and senses absorbed in their world of experience, will take us nowhere. The sun, the moon, the ether, the air and everything around us – will vanish in wholesale dissolution. At that time, the soul will continue to live in the world of faith – an eternal substance within us. We are told that with the help of favourable circumstances, with the help of faith, we can go back to God, back to Home. Such a prospect is given to us in this world of mortality – this world of burial grounds and cremation grounds. Here, everything will be buried.

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
All that beauty - all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike the inevitable hour:
The path of glory leads but to the grave."
Gray's Eulogy

Everything ends in the grave. All the achievements of the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, the beauty and the wealth obtained – all are in the world of experience, which is treacherous. All such achievements end in the grave. Only faith is not treacherous: it will remain with the soul – within – giving hope, prospect and sustenance. Home comfort. Back to Home, back to God where there is a proposal of alternatives so attractive that what sort of man will subsequently run after the experience of this 'civilized' atomic world? Science and experience are merely the Jaws of Death.

The Halo of Srimati Radharani

Faith has this kind of capital! Faith is nothing vague. Someone is awake in this world of experience. His day is the world of experience. His night is the soul's world, the world of spirit. Another class of men are wakeful in the soul world and are sleeping in this world of experience which is darkness for them. They are awake in that world of faith and that is a permanent world. My soul is a factor in that world of faith – however tiny – and it has got

some substantial position in eternity. It is an eternal factor and whatever I see in that plane, it is all eternal. None will be effaced (expunged) at any time. I am a member of that world of reality through faith and I can go to such a subtle plane of existence. There, I find that this subtle plane never dies nor undergoes transformation. No transformation in this plane of existence. He has no connection with the man of this world of experience in flesh and blood. That man is faithless – he is wakeful in this world but the world of Reality is night for him.

Misguided faith is not faith proper – not real faith. We cannot say that a misconception of a thing is the thing proper. There is possibility of misconception of anything and everything. Light is not merely the opposite of darkness; they are not in the same genre. A little light can remove a large amount of darkness, testifying to the latter's weak nature. Light can penetrate darkness; it can also penetrate light. It is possible according to the degree of its existence. Similarly, faith is almost non-existent in our present conditioned state. Yet faith is clearly perceived as a higher substance, having super-subjective existence. Someday, the whole of this mundane creation will vanish… but faith will remain forever. Faith is the particular potency of Srimati Radharani.

sukha-rupa krsna kare sukha asvadana
bhakta-gane sukha dite 'hladini'-karana
Chaitanya-charitamrita Madhya 8.158

"Ecstasy is Krsna Himself through which He feels, tastes and enjoys Himself. It is only possible through faith to transmit and distribute that sort of ecstatic joy to others. Faith is the very nature of that ecstatic potency, *'hladini sakti'* that is represented by Srimati Radharani in full. That faith can transmit Krsna Consciousness to the devotees and others outside its own circle."
Faith is the Halo of Srimati Radharani by the light of which others may understand Krsna. When the negative combines with the positive, they distribute their understanding for the utility and benefit of those outside. All parts of the negative aspect, the 'Mother' negative, the 'Centre' negative can expand and transmit this sort of faith and joy. 'Sraddha' – faith – is a peculiar substance which is to be inquired about and understood in depth.

The World of Matter is Underground

It is not abstract. We are wakeful in this material world. But there are others who are completely awake in this plane of faith. This world of matter is underground – far away from the devotee's conception of faith. This tangible world of enjoyment and exploitation is far, far away from those who are deeply engaged in the world of service through faith. These devotees feel that even desiring to see Krsna is also some kind of enjoyment. They say, "No, no, we will not disturb His sweet will. Whenever He likes He may call for us, then we shall get the chance to see Him, otherwise not."
We want Krsna – but not to order Him. "O Krsna, come and stand before us. We want to see You for our satisfaction." This is a kind of imposition by our exploiting nature. The devotees do not want for the satisfaction of their eye, or their inner hankering, that the Lord has to come and show Himself. This is not the conception of the higher devotees. They do not allow these thoughts to enter. "No, whenever Krsna feels the necessity, He will call for me. I shall then have a chance of seeing Him."

Subtle Discriminations

Sri Madhavendra Puri was fasting. He did not even beg for his livelihood from others. If something to eat comes, automatically, he may take that: otherwise he would fast. On a particular occasion. Krsna came and supplied some food to him and remarked. "O Puri, why do you not go begging for your food? Why do you remain fasting?" And we think that Madhavendra Puri was very fortunate because Krsna Himself came and supplied him with food. However, a qualitatively higher devotion we find in Srila Sanatana Goswami. When Srimati Radharani came and supplied foodstuff to Srila Rupa Goswami for cooking paramanna, milk-rice, then Srila Sanatana Goswami was very much disturbed at heart.
He challenged him, "What is this, Rupa? Did you aspire after something for me?"
Rupa replied, "Yes, I did my Lord. I thought if I could get some milk and rice, then I would prepare some milk-rice which is your favourite and invite you to take that *prasadam*."
Sanatana Goswami was irritated, "Oh, you have done wrong, Rupa. I have never found such taste amongst the ordinary objects of this world! It is so tasteful it must have originated from a special place. From where did you obtain this rice?"
Rupa explained, "A girl came in the name of her family guardians and supplied the materials to me."
Then Sanatana inquired, "Who is that girl?"
Rupa went to search her out in the nearby village of Javat, but she was not there – nor did anyone in the village ever remember seeing such a girl. Then Srila Sanatana Goswami could understand that Srimati Radharani Herself had come and supplied the ingredients.

Excitedly Sanatana said, "We are searching for Srimati Radharani to serve Her and now She has come and served us! What is this? What have you done, my brother? You wanted something to please me and that was supplied by Srimati Radharani. This is just the opposite of what we wanted – only to serve Srimati Radharani. Yet, She has come, served us and has gone away. This is our great misfortune." Sanatana Goswami was very dissatisfied and left with these thoughts.
Srila Rupa Goswami could not take that *prasadam* either. He had invited his *Gurudev* to take but he found just the opposite took place. He reflected, "I wanted to satisfy my Guru, to serve him, but what has happened?" Rupa Goswami also left that place and ran after Sanatana Goswami to try to appease him.

Exhaustively eliminate Worldly Desires

So, we find that Krsna carried food for Sri Madhavendra Puri and, in some consideration, that was a great fortune. But here a similar occurrence took place, and was considered a great misfortune by Sanatana Goswami. The higher kind of devotees never desire Krsna to serve them, supply them or give them darsana of Himself. To impose our whim on the Lord is not service proper. Whatever Krsna likes, He may do. However, we shall consider ourselves fortunate if we are given a chance to supply whatever is necessary for His service.

We have to exhaustively eliminate all our worldly desires to the extreme. We are to fully place ourselves at the disposal of that Supreme Autocrat Who is to command us, to order us and never to carry out any order from us. His nature is like that. He is eager to supply everything

for His devotees, but they do not like that the Lord will carry these necessities to them (Bhagavad-gita 9.22):

yoga-ksemam vahamy aham

Devotees of higher realization do not prefer Krsna to supply them with anything or serve them in any way. Their pure devotion is of this quality. They sincerely feel, "He is our Lord through faith. We don't want to see Him in order to satisfy our lower faculties that, 'He does indeed exist.' We have got no capacity to see Him." A lower kind of faith means trying to become the subject – making Him the object. A higher kind of faith – a more intense faith – proves that He is the Original Subjective Cause of everything. The Lord is that wonderful cause of everything from where all these effects come.

Carvaka, who belongs to a particular class of atheists, says, "No, no, there is no God – no higher substance. Whatever we see on the surface – that is all-in-all – everything." However, deeper faith says, the Cause of all causes is there – from whom everything is coming, everything is maintained and everything at last enters into again. The effect is not everything. That is not complete. The Cause is also present there in the effect.

The All-Fulfilling Cause

What is the nature of the cause? Some say *Brahman* is the cause; some say it is *Paramatma*, the Supersoul; still others say it is *Bhagavan*, Godhead, who predestines and is the designer of everything – the primal etiology. His potency is of a particular type. While creating and controlling everything, His potencies are automatically existing within Him.

sakala chadiya bhai sraddhadevira guna gai
yanra krpa bhakti dite pare

"In this way, give up everything and only try to keep faith."
Everything is there in faith. You do not require any proof. It is meanness to search after proof of God's existence. Deep faith says, "He is existing. Whatever I am searching for – everything is in Him and He is everywhere. *Omkara* – the seed of everything! The seed of theism is *Omkara*. "*Om*" means a big "Yes". Wherever I cast my glance to search for something – in one word it is, "Yes". Whatever you are searching for – that is! – "Yes", it does exist! You are searching for happiness, for pleasure, for joy, for fulfilment and the answer is all in one word – "Yes". Whatever you are searching for, whatever fulfilment you are in want of – it is there in one word, "*Om*" – "Yes". "*Om*" becomes *Gayatri*, then *Veda* and then *Vedanta*. It then comes to take the shape of *Srimad Bhagavatam* which contains the divine pastimes of the Lord.

The Scriptures beg His Forgiveness

The *Upanishads* and the *srutis*, subsequent to their participation in the *rasa-lila* of Lord Krsna, said:

"O, we could not conceive so much, and therefore, could not speak to the public concerning *rasa* of a higher type! Yes, *raso vai sah* is really *anandam. Anandam* is of this type: It has got such a play, that we could not understand it so well and therefore, we could not give it to the public. So, we beg forgiveness from You, Our Lord. You are such an inconceivably ecstatic substance. This is the full play of Your joyous pastimes and we could not catch it. We also failed to intimate to the public – the ordinary people – the higher joys of such kind of fulfilment to the extreme. We beg Your forgiveness."

"We hate the connection of this misconceived, lusty world, which is so nasty. But these pastimes are so beautiful and so much higher. We find this ecstatic joy includes even the union between man and woman that is hated and eliminated in this misconceived world. We could not understand this, our Lord. What we supplied to the public is a dry thing in comparison with this sort of joyous life."

Jesus, Prahlada, the Pillars of Faith

If we want to penetrate the deeper understandings of faith – not mere belief – we must go to the devotees. They are like so many pillars of faith. We are told electricity is everywhere, and there are so many dynamos that can show electric power. Similarly, there are so many devotees past and present with whom we can find real Godliness. They are standing like pillars of faith. If we accept Jesus Christ, then his ideal way of sacrifice will encourage and increase faith in us. So many devotees are there to help us. What sort of devotee is Prahlada? When we come in history to such a life like the great devotee Prahlada, then our heart is fulfilled, "Oh, how great – God is present there."

In this way, when our attention is toward the devotees, we automatically rise to a particular high standard of faith. When the devotees help us, we are in a safe plane with our attention towards them. So many pillars of faith are standing there and proving that the Lord is existing. The devotees are neglecting the objects of enjoyment and standing with their heads erect to show, to say and to declare that. "There is a Supreme Entity. We have seen Him repeatedly and we have experienced all this."

Faith in the advanced devotees is a very substantial help to us all, as their position is not flickering. They have a firm position because of their faith in the higher devotees. So, when one has got faith in the elevated devotees, then his faith – his devotion – is of tangible character.
Otherwise, the beginners, they have not much faith in the devotees, but some abstract faith in the Lord. That is not reliable. Devotion comes to a reliable standard when one can find devotion in the devotees and give more importance to them.

Above scripture, the devotees are there and our faith in the devotees is the real way. Faith in the devotees is something tangible to us. In the higher stages, one can trace the Supreme Entity everywhere, in every movement. It is His Sweet Will. When the middle things – the barriers within that give opposition – are gone, then direct connection with the Supreme Entity fully awakens.

The Tangible Causal Attraction

Sometimes the Lord likes to play hide-and-seek with the devotees. Sometimes He comes clear and sometimes He is vague. Whenever He is vague, the devotees begin to cry, "Where are You, my Lord? I don't feel You, I cannot see You. How can I continue my life? How can I live without You? You are so charming, so joyous, so fulfilling that I cannot live without Your connection."
In this way, the devotees begin to wail and cry when He appears vague to them. Everything is depending on the Lord's Sweet Will. If we want to trace the cause, then we shall find this is the cause of something, and that is the cause of the cause. Then we shall think, "Oh, this is the final substance, the Reality we are searching after. The whole world is searching after this beauty and charm of the Lord."

There is a song, "O Mountain! O Himalaya! O Alps! O Sumeru! What are you searching for with your heads erect? Have you seen the creator of this world? Have you attained the fulfilment of your life? Have you seen Him?" In this way, a devotee feels – in his heart of hearts – that everything is searching for Krsna, God, who is the complete fulfilment of life.

In this world of life and death, there is nothing tangible to attract our attention. In this phenomenal world, our inner heart searches after something eternal. There is *sat* – Eternal Consciousness; *cit* – satisfying our search for knowledge of Him; and *anandam* – satisfying our hankering for beauty and love. Love is the fulfilment of life. We shall be able to understand that when love awakens in the heart and the function of the brain is gone away. This is a peculiar and particular phase of life. Wherever we may be, we are automatically searching, searching, and searching for that big "Yes" – "*Om*".

"*Om*" means a big "Yes". Whatever you are searching for, it exists. What your inner heart hankers after, that exists and is existing. Whatever apparently you see, you must go to the inner substance – the Super-subject. The Lord of your search is there. From *Omkara* comes *Gayatri*, next comes the *Vedas*, and then the *Vedanta*. Lastly, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* descends to give a description of the ecstatic side, the joyful side of the Lord.

The Infinite Lord comes so close to the finite that the finite thinks, "He is one of us." He plays the part of such nearness – a near friend to us – so much so that we think, "He is one of us." This is the Lord's highest grace and kindness towards us. Our highest attainment is also there in His Divine Abode, Vrndavana.
Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told us, "Eliminate all other conceptions and make haste to that Vrndavana Lord – Sri Krsna. He is *Svayam Bhagavan* – God of Gods, Lord of Lords. He is the source of so many majestic displays of His supernatural powers.

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained it succinctly, "Search for Sri Krsna! There is no other alternative, no other duty in this world except what I say, 'Search for Sri Krsna!' Take His Holy Name, and talk about Him. Whatever you do, connect with Krsna Consciousness and go on with faith and firm determination. You will get your fulfilment of life very shortly."

So, go on taking His Holy Name, while searching or talking, whether you are sleeping, eating, walking or quarrelling. Whatever you are

doing, connect with Krsna and go on making progress. Sincere search is necessary for the aspiring devotee so that his Krsna conception may not be only a sham – a hypocritical endeavour. And you will get help in that direction from the real devotees.

Evaporating Realities

Anyhow, go on searching for Krsna with the help of the devotees, the scriptures and all sincerity within you. Whomever you meet with, talk about Krsna, and do not invite the prey of death – children, wife, money and everything else may evaporate the next moment. Do not think anymore about them. Sincerely searching for Krsna is the eternal joy in every step of your life. Krsna is not your concoction.

The source is the saints and scriptures, and not this mundane world of enjoyment. Neither through abhorrence or renunciation will you find Krsna. Krsna is the positive inquiry in the heart of the devotees. Those who are carried by the charm of this external world cannot understand what is their inner requirement. They are unfortunate. So, the main conclusion is to keep company with the devotees who have got real faith in Krsna. It is very, very rare in this world to find such devotees. If we want the help of that association, then you are to keep this ideal on the crown of your head.

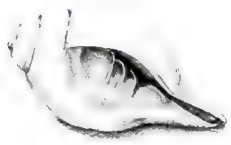
sadhu-sanga, sadhu-sanga, sarva sastre kaya
lava-matra sadhu-sange sarva siddhi haya
Chaitanya-charitamrita Madhya 22.54

"If properly utilized, a moment's association with the completely surrendered devotees is sufficient for your highest attainment. If one moment can be properly used, sufficiently used, then there is no necessity of long, long life. Only a point in time is sufficient to solve the whole problem of life if it is properly used in association with the devotees, the agents of Krsna. We shall try to associate with them at all costs. What is the necessity of ages and ages of living a long, long life if we are unconscious of our own self-interest? One moment with the agents of Krsna, if properly utilized, is sufficient to solve the whole problem of our life for which we are eternally wandering about for millenniums. We must be wakeful to our interest. We must not be negligent, but wakeful – to our own self-interest."

You are a Foreigner to your own heart

Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu came to tell us what is our real interest within. "You do not want to know your own heart. You do not know. You are a foreigner to your own heart and its demand. Faith in the devotees is the wealth within your heart – try to find that 'Hidden Treasure'." That was the direction of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. "It is all within you. You are to eliminate all foreign things, then within your heart you will find a Temple of Krsna. Your heart within is a Temple of Krsna. Search your own heart with the help of a proper guide and you will find Krsna there. A proper guide is not a foreign substance to you. Every heart is a temple of the Lord. It is your inner wealth. It is your Home – 'Back to God, back to Home.'"

The Super-subject, the Over-soul, descends to reveal Himself to the jiva soul. The jiva soul perceives the higher, heretofore inconceivable experience – within his consciousness. As the Super-subject withdraws Himself, the *jiva* is left with only the recollection of that experience. When this happens repeatedly, this constitutes the ontological development of faith in that Super-subjective Existential World.



Chapter Two

Somehow Connect with The Infinite

In the beginning, when I went to the Gaudiya Math, the *murti* – the Deity of Mahaprabhu – was there in another room. I asked, "this *murti* is made of what substance, earth or wood?" The devotee attending the Deity told me, "He is Mahaprabhu Himself. Do not try to see wood, earth or anything else. Mahaprabhu Himself is present there."

So, I questioned them further, "If Mahaprabhu Himself is there, then why is your Guru Maharaja – who is the greatest devotee – upstairs in another room? If Mahaprabhu Himself would have been present here, then whoever is the highest devotee amongst you should have stayed at His side. But he is staying upstairs in another room and Mahaprabhu is placed in a separate room near the street where everyone can see Him easily. Why your Guru Maharaj is not here by His side if He is Mahaprabhu Himself?"

They replied, "He is also at the side of Mahaprabhu in his heart." That is the higher conception, a more real conception of Mahaprabhu. Mahaprabhu's presence is here and also in his heart. This is a higher conception of Mahaprabhu than the Deity conception. He is always enjoying the presence of Mahaprabhu in his heart. Such a devotee is of a higher type.

So, Krsna Consciousness, God Consciousness is like that. It is *cinmaya* – it is conscious and spiritual. The Lord has manifested Himself in this mundane plane of our sense experience for our benefit. He is not to be neglected. However, this conception, this presence of His grace, is considered to be for the lower section. Yet the Deity should not be considered as an idol. The Deity is also His presence manifested for our gross senses. However, a devotee always sees all things connected to the Lord, the Centre.

archayam eva haraye pujam yah sraddhayehate
na tad-bhaktesu canyesu sa bhaktah prakrtah smrtah
(Srimad Bhagatavam 11.2.47)

"When we do not learn to appreciate the presence of the Lord in the heart of His devotees, but only confine ourselves to such symbols connected with Him, our standard of devotion is meagre."

Trace the Causal Existence of Everything

We cannot eliminate the plane of affection and love that we find here and there scattered in different ways. We are to trace the causal existence of everything. What is the unity in the background that is really harmonizing all these scattered experiences? One whose consciousness is raised to such a standard can see the background of everything as one, from One Centre. All these creations are handled, controlled and managed from One Centre. "Wherever he goes, he is always with My connection. I am not lost to him." In *Srimad Bhagavatam* it is said:

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavam atmanah
bhutani bhagavaty atmany esa bhagavatottamah
(Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.45)

"One who can see everywhere the connection of the Centre in the background, sees all things correctly. He sees the cause, the connection, the central position, the background, and also his own relationship to the Whole in that position."

Three Elements in any Experience

In any particular experience, there are three things: The Deepest Root (Sri Krsna), the Seer's connection (*Sri Guru*), and that which is having the experience of his connection (*jivatma*). This is in accordance to his position with the Centre and it is also interdependent on his adjustment with that environment. That adjustment is concomitant with his relationship to the Centre. Everything will be considered in relation to the position and desires of the Centre, and not any independent transaction with part and part. It is from the part to the Whole, and from the Whole to the part.

'What will be my position, my relationship to this part?' It must be calculated through the Centre, and that will be real. This relationship of "I and he," is considered a misconception. This misconception will not remain, as it is unreal. But if it comes through the Centre, then it will be real and we will not be frustrated or disappointed. This sort of measurement or estimation would be one of substance. The part-to-part relationship is unstable. It is truly unreliable and will not remain. However, the connection that comes through the Centre is substantial, real and will not frustrate us.

Sambandha-jnana

Philosophy in India means *darsan* – allow me to see, allow me to experience things – What is what? Our superficial estimation is not the whole conception. We should learn to see things and to know things properly. This is *sambandha-jnana*. What is our position in our environment? Is the environment real? Why? Is it only our eye experience, ear experience or, something more is in the background – behind everything? How can that be understood – only by our reason? … Never!

Applying our reason to understand the Infinite is futile. Then, how can He be known? The Infinite is not – cannot be by definition – the object of our experience, our inspection. He is far above that. He has got His own responsibility to make known to us His position as the controller of the whole. He sends His agents and His announcements to make us understand that our creation, our sustenance and our destruction is being controlled by Him. We shall try to meet with Him and attain some understanding with that superior power about our own goal of life.

athato brahma jijnasa
(*Vedanta-sutra, Uttara-mimamsa*)

Inquire about the place where you are living. This inquiry must be extensive – not superficial. It should be real. Wherever you are, inquire into your environment, not superficially, but with real attention to understand where you are and who you are. Who is above you? Who is lower than you? Study all these things. This will really be beneficial to your own interest. Otherwise, all your attempts will be useless and perishable. Your treachery is to your own self. The way you are living, that is a treacherous life – towards your own self. Therefore, try to understand things clearly, what is what and then live accordingly.

Ordinary persons cannot give up their livelihood – their everyday duties and necessities – so they miss the association of the higher agents in their daily activities. In daily life, so many duties must be discharged, so many necessities are there for us to procure and so, that is mixed – not unalloyed. Therefore, "Give up these duties and make exclusive inquiry about the environment and its relationship to one's self. This is *jnana*.

Jnana-sunya-bhakti

In the third plane, the practical life in connection with that Infinite is possible. In connection with the Infinite, there is also such a life – so many duties – and that is mixed with the central interest – the deepest interest. *Jnana-sunya-bhakti* means, "Pursuance and maintenance of duties connecting us with the Centre."

This is in the eternal position. No death can remove us from there because that is in connection with the Centre. When we are doing some duty, no death can challenge that eternal conduct. In other words, there is the plane of service, and the plane of exploitation, or enjoyment. In the middle is the plane of renunciation, the abscissa – no man's land – the border of the two planes, *brahman* and *viraja*.

We are to study these details. There are five stages:

1. The stage of inquiry
2. The stage of admission
3. The stage of temporary duty
4. The stage of being established in one's own post of service and then
5. The stage of being harmonized totally with the Centre.

These five stages are again subdivided. They pass through inquiry in eternal life:

1. *Sraddha* – faith
2. Our association with those who are expert in that plane, *sadhu-sanga*
3. Whatever duties are recommended by Him we are to go on doing, *bhajana-kriya*
4. The undesirable things are eliminated wholly – *anartha-nivrtti*
5. We get our continued position in divine life.

We then experience the real worth and attraction for that sort of spiritual life, then so many symptoms of divine life descend in our own existence. Gradually, we shall merge into the interest of God and find our true self there in His relationship.

Faith is so real that Christ left this life, finished this life playfully, totally forgetful of the interests of this life. Socrates also gave his life for faith. So, faith is something much more substantial than our fleeting desires in the lower life.
We are running towards plurality, so many separate interests, many thousands of things are not necessary. Therefore engage yourself with the One, connect yourself with the One Centre. Thereafter, no more running hither and thither to connect with the unwholesome appeal of this world. The One is sufficient. Connect with the One Centre, try to find the Centre of All-Knowledge.

By knowing Him, we can know everything

When we understand the particular laws of mathematics, then so many sums are automatically done. So, if we get the law – the basic formula in our own hands – then, we have got everything. What is apparently impossible becomes possible. We are to connect ourselves with this sort of understanding – this is the domain of faith proper. When we connect with the All-controlling Central Point, then we shall be able to know everything that is necessary. If we go to the higher office, then from there we can gather everything about the branch offices. So, inquire about that substance.

If we get information from the Centre, then we have information from all the different sub-offices and branches. All the branches are "controlled" by the All-Controlling Centre. Therefore, we are to connect ourselves with that Centre. We have this necessity: "By knowing Him, we can know everything, by obtaining Him, we can obtain everything." We will go directly to the Centre. This is the direction – the path to trod – and it is possible. He who thinks it is possible and engages himself in this pursuit – he is *sraddhavan*. Such a devotee has got sound faith, *sraddha*. Then his inquisitiveness (of the intellect) is satisfied. The whole substantial, practical life he will also find fully present there; it is not imagination.

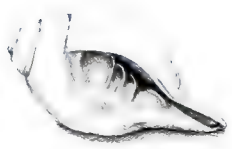
Mahaprabhu came to give not only theoretical solutions, but to help your whole practical life which will also be benefited by knowing, inquiring and understanding this eternal Truth. Your practical life at every point will find its fullest satisfaction – if you inquire on the basis of this background. You will be benefited in every detail of your life's necessity. All your practical necessities that you are not conscious of at present – all will find their fullest satisfaction there. You will have engagement, and you will feel that you are deriving more satisfaction than you could have ever imagined. All your attempts are procuring fulfilment in that plane.

ceto-darpana-marjanam bhava-mahadavagni-nirvapanam
sreya-kairava-candrika-vitaranam vidyavadhu-jivanam
anandambudhi-vardhanam prati-padam purnamrtasvadanam
sarvatma-snapanam param vijayate sri-krsna-sankirtanam
Sri Siksastakam, 1

"You will obtain your fullest satisfaction beyond your most satiated imagination. You will feel not only in connection with an ocean of joy, but at every step, you will find full enjoyment that is ever new. You will have to experience new fulfilment of life at every moment. Every moment is new fulfilment beyond your estimation and by that fulfilment – by that satisfaction, you will not be the loser. You will not be responsible for any reaction. You will feel you are

being purified at every moment. By enjoyment here, you are impure with reaction. But in that process in connection with the Infinite, whatever satisfaction or enjoyment you will experience even though new at every step, will not draw any reaction. You will feel wholesale purification when you do that; you will feel the ecstasy which is drawn only by your dedication."

Dedication, ecstasy, satisfaction in your search – these things will give you joy – but that joy will not mix with dirt: it will only purify you. Whatever you learn will only be purifying. It is so noble because the basis is dedication – not exploitation. Cultivation of Krsna Consciousness in its highest stage is such: the more you enjoy, the more you are purified. Such a program Mahaprabhu has recommended to us from *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the last projection of revealed Truth from the great expounder, Sri Vedavyasa.



Chapter Three

The Joy of Self-Abnegation

Everything is to be enjoyed by the Lord. If we can understand this principle of life then it is our duty to taste only what He has already enjoyed. We are to approach divinity – Reality – in this spirit of dedication. If we can practice this habit we can be free from the whole of the illusory potency – *maya*. All our duties should be done in a spirit subservient toward the Centre according to His direction or at even a higher level of understanding according to His own whims.

The autocrat has chalked out a path and I am exclusively following that path. If we do not follow or if we stand still, that is an offence. And if I go in another direction, that is also an offence. We must follow in the footsteps of that Autocrat. The principal way of upper life is to follow in the footsteps of the Autocrat in a serving mood. This is the real path. All our illusions will be conquered if we can only try to accept this principle of life. If we do not try for this, it is an offence even to our own selves. And if we do otherwise, that is also an offence. This is law above all law. And for our own best interests, we must mark this.

Following to the Nearest Millimetre

Follow His footsteps faithfully, as no other law is possible here, because He is actually the Autocrat. We shall not be the losers because He is a sweet and loving Autocrat. He is the Autocrat but He is sweet. And you will also get sweetness, fulfilment and love by following in the footsteps of that Autocrat. Beauty is the Autocrat; Sweetness is the Autocrat; Love is the Autocrat – and that is beyond All-Law. We are required by that dynamic character to follow in those footsteps everywhere – to the nearest millimetre!

This is the summary of the All-Serving Principle coming from the lotus mouth of Sri Uddhava, considered the greatest devotee according to the consideration of Sri Krsna Himself. Of course, Uddhava admires the *gopis*' love for the Lord, but more risk is there in that kind of Divine Love. Their opposition to the sweetness also becomes service in such positions where the servants are crossing the realm of their master. Service, the All-Serving Principle, has got such a position! Service reaches such a stage of nearness that even the Autocrat comes down to His devotees. Such risky service is possible.

ajnayaivam gunan dosan, mayadistan api svakan
dharman santyajya yah sarvan, mam bhajeta sa ca sattamah
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.11.32

"In society, one must obey the law. But there is also the possibility of crossing the law to show faithfulness to the king. If one risks his life and reputation in crossing the general law, and thereby enters into the Royal Chambers to fight with an assassin, then he will be considered the best and most loyal servitor. Similarly, the Lord is saying, "I have already ordered in the Scriptures, 'Do this and you shall be promoted. If, by crossing My previous orders on a particular level, one follows My footsteps, then he is sure to be promoted.'"

We shall then find no charm for the temptations that are around us. Our intuition – our far-sightedness – will say to us, "do not follow these travelling phenomenal proposals. They are not reliable, but treacherous. They are like black market dealings with some self-interest for profit and gain – trying to get more than the real market price for a commodity. These proposals will be detrimental for your progressive march towards Divinity. Do not allow yourself to be captivated by these external charms – they are treacherous exhibitions. Only take the prasadam which is enjoyed by the Lord." Everything should be done with this idea in mind, and this will fully relieve us.

Help beyond our Wildest Expectations

Whatever you do, whether in dress or in food, you are to act according to what is sanctioned by Him – following in His footsteps. We shall always perform everything in that consciousness – in God consciousness or Krsna Consciousness. God is Beauty and He is the Autocrat. Whatever our engagement, we shall perform with the help of Krsna Consciousness in our heart and Divine Help will come to us beyond our wildest expectations. Doing nothing or acting without the proper attitude, the proper consciousness, is considered detrimental.

Whatever you do, you should do in the proper consciousness at every step. You should do everything in a legal way in the highest sense of the term, "legal" which in this instance means He who propounds the law.
We shall do according to His Will, the Will of the Autocrat, Sri Krsna. This is the sum and substance. We are to go on with Krsna Consciousness following at every step in this way. We are to go on eating, sleeping and doing all our duties, but always in the association of Krsna. Whatever we do must be done in Krsna Consciousness, otherwise all activities are futile.

The author of a particular book once criticized the intellectuals who wrote about Indian philosophy and a comparative study of world religions. His objection was emphatic: "They could not approach the Eastern philosophy by the Eastern method. They approached the Eastern philosophy by the Western method and that is considered to be intellectualism."

Eastern philosophy's nature and method of dealing is revolutionary. That author also quoted from the *Bhagavad-Gita* as we generally do, concluding the approach be Eastern – from the subjective to the objective in this case.
Otherwise, it is all the study of reflection and nothing of the substance – the dealings of the shadow. And to think that by getting the shadow you have got the substance – that is self-deception to the extreme. This progress is not upwards. This progress comes towards the lower side. Progress is not in the empirical method – the ascending method. No. Real progress is in the descending method – coming down from the Autocrat Himself.

They must improve their negative character so that the Positive may come there easily. Pure negative character means taking leave from all aspirations of this mundane existence. It means, "I have no ambition for any mundane achievement. I am finished with all these worldly ambitions. I am disgusted with mundane achievement. Now I have come to search for something Divine."

Searching to be Utilized

This then is the first attitude – *pranipatena*. Then *pariprasnena*, inquiry is there but never in a challenging spirit of trusting only in oneself and one's past experiences. It is not that by taking the past results and thereby assessing the future, we shall be successful - that is not *pariprasnena. Pariprasnena* is a very earnest type of hearing with one's whole self to utilize – at His command. And the main substance is *seva* – "I want to live for Him. I am worthless and I am searching to be utilized by Him. There is absolutely nothing so valuable to me as the direct experience of myself. I have finished my life here tending to fleeting fantasies. My prospect is all finished here as this is all worthless living – to live in this world for this world." This is an honest enquirer – *pariprasnena*.

"Life is worth living if it can be used by the higher agents. I have come to understand this: Service and acceptance will come from the upper side. This is progress. It does not depend on me that is, it is not under my control. He may or He may not accept me: He may or He may not give me admission. It depends solely on Him. Only some degree of surrender from my side is necessary."

It is not that I am the subject and as a master, I travel over the soil on this side. This is all an offence. It also stands as an obstacle to my real progress. I am not going to be master of any particular land or plane of life, but a slave, a kind of servant. It is not that I am giving some service and drawing some salary as if I am in an equal position. No – I am not selling my energy. Service does not mean selling my energy in order to get some remuneration. It is the service of a slave. I want to put my ego into the fire. The ego is the cause, the root of all disturbances in my life. It must be reduced to ashes and then, a new life will begin.

In a slave conference, will the slaves try to search for some right to their dealings with the master position? This is a laughing matter. It is ridiculous – especially in Krsna Consciousness. It is all autocracy and no law – anarchy. So, this is more difficult to attain. The service is also of this kind. The result of the service I will not accept. I shall accept no salary of any kind. It will all go to my master.

jivera 'svarupa' haya-krsnera 'nitya-dasa
(Chaitanya Charitamrta, Madhya 2.108)

My constitutional position is that I am an eternal slave of the Lord. It is not that I shall get some remuneration by slavery and try to lead a life of independence. Slave does not mean master or owner of anything. No ownership is allowed there. As much as I shall be accepted as a good slave, I shall find that I have got no ownership in any plane of existence. Ownership, the demand of ownership, the standing of one's ownership – that is the greatest enemy to him – that prospective *bhakta* – on this path.

If I am the owner of something, some knowledge or some substance, then that ownership should be given up. Whatever I hear from the *sadhus*, whatever I shall get – that will go to my master. Service of this nature becomes *bhakti*, devotion. All the nine processes are considered as *bhakti*, devotion, when they have such qualification. The benefit I shall derive from this culture of devotion will not come to me, but will go to my master. This may seem to be

something imaginary to us at present, but it should be the basis of our inquiry. Otherwise, we shall add trouble to this mundane world of shadow – without getting any touch of the Reality.

Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur, stressed that he did not like that one will only take the Holy Name, but he wanted that they should also partake in service. A serving attitude must be cultivated within us. The process is to dissolve the worldly ego. The ego is already present there. We do not have to acquire it – only dissolve it. The flow will then come from the higher side and we are fully dependent on that Divine Grace. We have nothing to do as it will come from the higher side. We are only to demand or want that. "I am needy, I am the most needy; I am extremely needy."

This is what we shall try to accept and understand. This is the nobility of that special teaching of our Guru Maharaja in this age. Through dedication, the Lord will be attracted to you and you will progress by His grace and not – by your energy. "You are possessed by a ghost. That ghost must be driven out. Then, your normal condition will return.
If we are fully dependent on Him, then whatever is necessary will come automatically. This sort of self-abnegation and preparedness of service is necessary. Whether He is selecting me as a servant or not – that depends on His Sweet Will. "I have nothing to do but only to try and make myself fit for His Grace. I am the worst of all; I am the most needy and worst of all. I am haunted by so many undesirable objects of the senses. So, I am not worthy. I am the poorest of the poor, the neediest of the needy."

The negative side is our normal position as we are in this organic whole. Your position is something like this. The hair can be divided into a hundred parts and then one part is again divided into a hundred. You should think your position like that in this universe. So, you do not want to lord it over because as a result of that, you are suffering. Give up that current forever. Come to the normal position and again you will find that you are not a master, but you are in a helpless position. Then help from the upper side will come. This is not a hypocritical attitude, but genuinely, sincerely, you will find that you are helpless.

In the name of *bhakti* – devotion – to gather some intellectualism or some mystic power will surely be misguiding to us. If we can trace any progress within us, then we are considered nowhere. These things are not trustworthy in the ordinary sense.
One time, two or three celibate wanted to say something to our Guru Maharaj, but they hesitated. Our Guru Maharaj asked them, reading their attitude, "You want to say something to me, but you hesitate to do so?"
"Yes."
"You say what you have to say to me."
They said, "We have done service in the mission for more than twelve years but we don't find any progress. This is what we came to report to you."
Then my Guru Maharaj said, "Do you say this rightly, sincerely? Sincerely you say that you have made no progress after ten or twelve years?"
They replied, "Yes, yes, of course we sincerely feel what we say."
Then he asked again, "But is it that you want to abandon the mission?"
They said, "No, we don't want that – we couldn't abandon the mission."
He then said, "Alright, then you are in a healthy position. Go on continuing your duties.

What should we understand from this? What should we understand in this exchange? Is it very difficult that after ten years of service in this mission, they say that I have got nothing? What benefit can we get from understanding this? The benefit is, "you are saved from the disease that, 'I got something. I have got something in my possession' – this is mania!

Nothing can be got here from our position. Everything is in His control. You should look out for that disease – "I have got something." But they are telling, "But still, I have lost so many years in the mission, and also serving without any remuneration. We are giving our energy and we do not get anything in return."
And our Guru Maharaj – how very peculiar is this? "Selflessly working without any benefit – then, that work keeps me in a good position. Therefore, I ensure that you are healthy and not in a diseased condition. You are in top spiritual health because you are working and getting nothing – still, you are giving your service without any return. You are in a good position and you are in the best of health."

To say that we have got something – that is dangerous. We must work without any remuneration in return. Can you conceive of that? How? Our real progress is made in that line of conquering the organic Whole, the Autocrat. And His nature of progress is of this kind. So, it is not within the jurisdiction of our satanic intellect. Our intellect means satanic – in opposition to God. We do not want to be a separate god here, like so many different Demigods. *Seva*, only unconditional service will save us. And what do we want? What are we given? – More tendency to serve.

What is *prema*? What is love? That sacrifice is rewarded by more intense hankering for service. A self-giving attitude that is the remuneration. It will be increased in us more and more. Your serving tendency will be increased. The appreciation of slavery will be increased. If you work as a slave the appreciation of slavery will be more intensely at His disposal.

Self-forgetfulness is of a dynamic character. Self-forgetfulness in totality demands self-forgetfulness. Then we shall be able to feel the deepest plane, the flow of the deepest plane, that plane of the Autocrat within us. Our present ego will not allow us to go to the deeper plane, the most fundamental plane of the irresistible flow. It is so subtle, so sweet, and we can go, we can reach that destination. Nothing can oppose us. We can attain that fundamental flow. Self-forgetfulness is of such dynamic character!
If particularly we want to look at our progress, then nothing comes within our vision. Whenever we are particular to feel, "What is the consequence of my energizing in this life?" "What is my acquisition after long engagement in a particular duty?" If we want to look for some acquisition or qualification, then we are finished. He loves to come of His own accord. The Lord is not attracted by the qualification of anyone. No qualification is sufficient for Him; in any case, our so-called qualifications are paltry by His standards.

So, "Die to Live". We are to die a real death; not as a fashion or imitation – No. Our Ego is really to die. There is no charm in the environment where we live, only dissatisfaction. There is no friendship with any environment except with the devotees, the agents of a deeper plane who tell us, "We have nothing: we are His property. We may be utilized in any way He likes, taking us to the dignified nobility of our birthright, our human existence. We do not want

anything but to be utilized by the Higher if possible. We always feel unfit because of the reaction of our sinful life. However, this process –this path is still recommended for us.

Real shelter

What is faith? We are incomplete without the Lord. The fulfilment of our lives is in the hands of the Absolute. That is faith. Everything is in the hand of the Absolute and we are nowhere. We are helpless, sincerely searching for our real shelter. The environment is all hypocrisy. We want a real shelter, as we are shelter-less. We have nothing to attract the Lord towards us. So, we must not live a hypocritical life. We have no qualification to attract anyone towards us. Wholesale, we want to be utilized by the Lord. If possible, our energy is to be wholesale thrown at the disposal of some wonderful person who can utilize it. This is faith proper which releases us from the clutches of Satan. Satan's self-advertising, self-aggrandizing energy as the anti-god is encouraging more Satanism in us such as the worldly ego, separatism and independent life. Satanism, the conception that we are masters, must be fully dissolved and discarded via disassociation.

We are nothing without the connection of that wonderful person. Someone may utilize us – some miraculous person! Some miraculous force may utilize me. We should not seek any separate self-interest that means surrender to Satan – the anti-god.
Everything is accomplished if I can submit to the Centre or Central Power of the Absolute. This means faith, this is called faith. We can make progress towards the Truth by faith and not by any other means, not through the senses, not with the intellect and not with our reason. Nothing can measure that substance except faith. We must ask ourselves, "Am I ready to depend only on that faith?"
In the beginning, we shall have to drive out the misconception of faith, that is, many people will say that, "Faith is superstition. What is faith? It is not something tangible." Our civilization will accuse us, that we are required to be reduced to nothingness, to no worth – and this cannot have any good in it.
This misconception of faith is blind. It is the worst type of superstition in our present civilization. But faith is such that we are nothing at present. Still, we can be utilized in our proper position: but we are far, far from that sort of position. The negative side always progresses and the foundation is *sadhu-sanga*, the association of devotees. It becomes possible to select the agents in proper company. In this attitude we can select the divine agents of a higher type. There are different kinds of agents from different conceptions of so-called religion. According to our faith, we shall select our well-wishers and agents. According to the classification of our faith, we will make progress on that side.

So, faith means deep confidence in the Central Absolute. Our association, our selection of the agents from that eternal source coming to help us, depends on our faith. We are like birds of the same flock – same feather. So, we are to recognize that feather, and then we shall associate with them. Then, dedicated action will begin by that association. He will be the teacher, and we shall be the student. Now the question is, "What kind of faith?"

There is a plane of exploitation, renunciation and dedication – service. The first, exploitation, may be easily eliminated. We are suffering from so many reactions and we can easily become

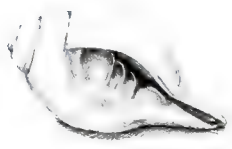
disgusted with this exploitative, "elevationist" mentality. But then, the temptation of complete retirement in the renunciation school is staring us in the face. Many will flock there. "Oh, complete retirement. This world is not worth living for. We want to retire from here permanently." Buddha, Sankara and others will come with their agents to try to take you to that plane of renunciation or retirement. Then, there is the plane of dedicated life. I want to live, but not to renounce nor to exploit. Exploitation means to give pain to others. But I want to live without giving any pain to others, without any reaction. Dedication means self-sacrifice.

Then, the question will come to give oneself to others. We shall try to give without taking, and this is safe when it has got connection with the Centre Who is the designer and destines everything. The connection with Him will then be something substantial. Otherwise, all is futile with no position at all. But in this way we are carried by that designer Whose destiny resides in that conception of Autocracy as Krsna. We shall then gradually see only love, affection and beauty present in the Autocrat and nothing else.

He is a charmer who can charm by His beauty and by His behaviour. He is the only Absolute Autocrat – Affection, Love, Beauty, Harmony and Sweetness is the Autocrat.
If we can find Him in this way then we shall go to His side, but the process of going also depends on Him. Selection will come from Him as we are nowhere, we are helpless. We are to increase our helplessness so much so that His agents will be attracted. They will come to recommend us. This will be substantial.
We will always be conscious that we cannot be masters of this land of exploitation. We are fully dependent on the Lord. If anything is given to us for food, we shall take it, otherwise not. Such sort of surrendered life is most desirable – that much self-giving is desirable. Then, we are given hope and inspiration that the Centre is of such high quality.

The *Brahma-Samhita* will come and say, "The land is touchstone, *cintamani*. The *vrksas*, the trees, are wish-fulfilling entities. Who are the inhabitants? Their movement means dancing, their speaking means singing – such a land is there. We may be accepted, recruited for that plane of life according to the degree of our surrender. This sort of sacrifice is a peculiar, unconditional sacrifice and does not come under any kind of calculation.

Our faith is not within calculation but is emphatically in the Infinite sweetness of our Lord. We are to know the Infinite in that beautiful land where the Absolute Autocrat plays according to His own sweet whims. So, be prepared for extreme self-sacrifice and self-abnegation. This is done through service –a serving attitude and our self-giving. We shall not be attracted by some ambitions life with ambitious ideals. No! Rather, we shall try to give ourselves totally for His fullest satisfaction. This will be the perfection of all our endeavours.



Chapter Four

The Panacea

Ill fated are those who are very eager to find fault in others and do not have any time to find fault in themselves. Also, the other side of your necessity is not to find defects but find attributes in others. Why do you allow yourself to engage in the position of finding fault? There is ample place to find goodness in the devotees. Why are you not engaging yourself in that association?

Why the tendency to find fault in others? May there be a more faulty person than yourself? Why do you engage yourself only to see the lower rather than fix yourself to the higher? Upon doing so, you will find that the devotees are of higher quality than yourself. Why not attend that section? Why, unfortunately, do you go to the lower section with your attention to find fault? On one side, there are beautiful flowers – on the other side is rubbish. Why do you inspect the rubbish instead of all the beautiful flowers?

You yourself stand in the witness box. You are the criminal. You are the culprit. Why should you look at the rubbish when so many beautiful flowers are there? You see injustices but you do not see justice? Why not merge to the positive portion. If one hand is working and another is paralyzed, then giving no attention to the working hand, shall I only attend to the diseased part? I must care for the paralyzed hand surely, but what already has full capacity, I must also utilize that. Why you are always looking towards feeling the pain of the diseased part and continuously preaching this, ignoring the healthy parts?

On one side there is good – God is there. Why do you go to Satan only to keep company with satanic persons while there are godly persons? Why not to God's side? On one side there is heaven and on the other side, there is hell. God has no fault; yet by the fault of Satan, we must suffer? That reasoning has got no logic.
You are suffering from your own misdeeds – that is the real logic. Neither God nor Satan is responsible for that. Therefore, concentrate on your own self, pray to the Lord and try to keep aloof from Satan.

You are holding a marginal position. Your limited free will is your capital. You should always utilize that towards the Godly side, taking one away from the satanic side. This limited capital that you have, you are to begin your business with that. But you think, when you get a good capital, then you will begin business? This is imagination! Whatever little capital I have got, I shall start my business with that. My attention, my energy will help me in the future."

The Best Benefit

A man has an accident in the journey and he loses consciousness. But, when a little consciousness is regained, what should he do? He will utilize that consciousness directing; "Take this body to my guardians, my home is there. Oh my friend, carry my body to my home."

This will be the best benefit of that limited consciousness which returned to the man – he was able to use his good knowledge. An intelligent man will consider that whoever will take care of this body with care and affection is the best prospect for its rehabilitation. Therefore, he shall request to place this body under their care.

So, whatever awakening we have in consciousness, we shall utilize that by placing ourselves in the care of Godly persons; only then there is value of devotion to God. Those who know the value of devotion to God, they are our near relations. They will appreciate this inner awakening, and they will take care of my devotional self. This is the penultimate benefit of *sadhu-sanga*: when medicine or our own attempts cannot heal us, the doctor advises us to make a change. Then the air and the water will naturally come to help improve our health. So, also, the atmosphere of saintly persons improves our spiritual health. Anyway, to always remain in the company of devotees in the same *sampradaya* – the same line – but superior devotees, by taking the lower position. Such association is most desirable for any person aspiring to progress spiritually.

The Real Meaning of *sadhu-sanga*

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the gist of the advice in *Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu*: "We are to associate with those superior to us, but in the same line of the Gaudiya Vaisnava devotees in Krsna Consciousness. They also carry the same conception of the spiritual Truth, but superior to me. If I engage myself even as a sweeper in that camp, it will be highly valuable for my future spiritual life."
Who is responsible if you look to see injustice? You are held responsible. What is bad, that is your share. You are to take the whole responsibility of misdeed in your hand. If you cannot feel this then you are insincere, not only you but everyone. Your free will is responsible for all misdeeds and misguided circumstances in the environment. This is the first principle of spiritual life.

What is bad in me, I am responsible for that. You are responsible for seeing, for coming in connection with that vision. There are also good dealings in another sphere. Why have you come to see this misjudgement and mistreatment of so many who are quarrelling with each other? There are so many good dealings and you have not acquired a position to remain in that layer? Then why? "I am responsible for all the undesirable things in me – that is a fact. My weak free will has taken me down into this present undesirable environment and no one else is responsible."

This fact you are to realize. If you ignore this, then you are in *maya* – misconception, illusion. When you sincerely realize this position, then your dark days will come to an end. When you feel that only you yourself are responsible for all these miserable things, then good days will awaken for you. This is the fact. It is not only a conception to achieve some end. It is not an imaginary conception to take help of in order to get out of the present condition. It is not like that; it is a fact, it is for everyone whether good or bad – he is responsible. Neither God nor Satan is responsible.

There are two sides; good and bad. We are responsible for the freedom that is given to us. God is not responsible for the fall of Adam and Eve into this world. Satan was present and he was

trying to entice her. Why shall we accept the advice of Satan which is to take fruit from the tree of knowledge? This is the result of a loss of faith in God. This is a fall from the stage of surrender to God. This is a misuse of our own valuable free will. Then the result is, we have to come to this world and eat by the sweat of our brow, by our own labour – "Labour and Live".

Before, when we were in a surrendered position, God was feeding everyone of us. We cannot underestimate the circumstances. In a rich country, anyone born is maintained by the state. So, in the state of God, everyone is being maintained. Otherwise, when he takes charge of his own decision by his small faculty, then by the advice of Satan, he comes to take the fruit of "The Tree of Knowledge", in order to exercise his own free will by coming down from the stage of surrender. It cannot be more clear. he misuses his freedom and comes to this world to labour and live in action and reaction.

Vulnerability, weakness, independence and a paucity of free will is the cause to be traced. Neither God nor Satan can be hold responsible or accountable for the fall of the soul. If we do not follow the advices of Satan, then we shall not fall. But to accept the advice of Satan depends on our free will and when free will is misused, we commit colossal mistakes. The soul subsequently has to fall down to this material world – leaving heaven. The responsibility is with the free will that is vulnerable, weak and paltry due to not having full freedom. The smallest part of freedom we own, and by its misuse we come to this calculating world of action and reaction – labour and live.

When we maintain our position in heaven where God is All-in-All – where we are His servants – then there is no sin and, no fear. The root possibility of fear comes from the association of a secondary cause. In heaven, all is harmonized and controlled by God. "I am there; I am His; I belong to Him; everything for Himself." As long as I live in that atmosphere – "Everything for Sri Hari!" – then I am safe. But when I deviate from that consciousness – separate in interest from the common interest of God – then I shall have to come into this world of action and reaction. No one else is responsible for our displeasures. The environment is not responsible; you have acquired that. And any calculated plan to protect yourself against reactions of your own doing is also an implication involving more reaction.

If suddenly I find myself in the prison house, then who is responsible? There are so many culprits, so many deceitful persons, so many thieves in the prison house. If I find myself in the midst of them, then who is responsible? I have acquired that position. There is also heavenly association but instead of that, "Why am I put in the prison house where, wherever I look I see culprits. Why am I here? Why am I not with heavenly association? Who is responsible? Who?"

The Panacea

In this way, I am to try and understand that I am responsible for being there. First, there must be the diagnosis, then the treatment and nursing. Nursing and treatment is good, but it must follow the diagnosis. The diagnosis is, "I am the culprit!" and the medicines must be applied accordingly. A thorough cure and not a patch-job is what will be advantageous. Then the thorough, wholesale treatment is like this:

bhunjana evatma-krtam vipakam
(Srimad Bhagavatam 10.14.8)

This is the magical cure for fault-finding. *Srimad Bhagavatam* recommends the system of a magical cure – this is the diagnosis proper. Preaching must be on the basis of this truth. Otherwise, all is haphazard. The *Srimad Bhagavatam's* preaching is like this – deep penetration to the root cause of the disease.
Do the *Vedas* advocate a dreamless sleep induced by renunciation? That is not the conclusion accepted by the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. The *Srimad Bhagavatam* has accepted the wholesome organic life. It is unavoidable that we have to live with some particular paraphernalia. Complete retirement entering into *Samadhi* or dreamless sleep is also not the conclusion of life. That is a temporary arrangement. But, permanent adjustment must be for Him. Everything is for Him.

"I am for Him and not for myself. He is also holy, so accommodating and so good. I am for Him and that is my best prospect. My best prospect is with Him – the Absolute Good, the Organic Whole, and I cannot leave that. I cannot look after my separate goals. My goal must be part of the Whole – such adjustment is necessary. So, if I am to live in a holy atmosphere, in an organic environment, then I shall always be cautious and careful to detect my own fault."

The Basis of Dedication

Neither exploitation nor renunciation can give permanent solution – but "dedication" will. The basis of dedication is that the eye is not faulty:

karmany evadhikaras te ma phalesu kadacana
ma karma-phala-hetur bhur ma te sango 'stv akarmani
(Bhagavad-gita 2.47)

"The whole of your attention must be towards the discharge of your own duty without caring for the environment. That is in My command. I am to look after that. You must give your whole attention to the discharge of your own duty." And, if all the units are wholly connected to discharge their own duty, then it will be heavenly. But when we would rather find fault with the environment – "They are thieves" and I shall also become a thief should that be the conclusion?
Everything here is undesirable. I may not even know the extent of undesirability in me. There are many things underground and they will gradually come to the surface. I shall then find, "Oh! All these undesirables are in me?" They must go out and then the real gems will come forth. The gold should be cast into the fire. When the alloy portion vanishes then the real gold will be visible. Now at present our condition is that this pure gold – it is mixed with some alloy.

So, "Die to Live" – throw yourself into the fire. Your so-called ego at present is mixed with alloy and that alloy must be destroyed by the fire of suffering – fire means suffering – and the golden gems will then come out. Alloy is not a part of your body nor your soul – it is

acquired. The inner soul's *svarupa* will then come forth. So, if you want to live a real proper, noble and holy life, then what you think you are at present – that must die.

And preaching will be part of your adjustment. If this environment is not suitable, then I shall try another environment that may be more suitable to me. That is a small thing. But the main line is what I say and the small partial adjustment may vary differently from place to place. Anyhow, the main line must be – "No complaints against the environment". A bad workman quarrels with his stool; the origin is the workman. So, there is no benefit in quarrelling over the effect. That was food and in his association, it became stool.

So, shall we preach against the injustices of the environment? Never. What is necessary you will feel from within – not as a pleasure but as a duty – and only if it comes from above, i.e., if you find some inspiration for the cause of the higher conception, and not for your personal cause. If you go to criticize for your personal interest, then that fault will come back to you. It will enter into you. But if for purification, and not out of envy, you seek help from the higher, then you will be purified. Otherwise, you may find yourself in the same position the next moment. "I am vulnerable. What I am criticizing to be so bad, the next moment I may be left in such a deplorable position. I do not know the ways of the Infinite environment. I am a doll playing in the hands of the Infinite.

"In the next moment, from human birth, I may have to go to a dog's birth, a cat's birth or an insect's birth. They are descending into the mental system."
So, don't go to criticize. Don't be hungry to find the fault of others. But if someone finds fault in you, then you may consult a higher authority – a more senior Vaisnava: "There have been some complaints against me. Whether or not they are valid, I don't know. Please, can you help me to understand my defects?" – Such an enquiry has no enviousness, no spirit of competition that I am good and he is bad: it is devoid of mischievous motives underground. Only it must be endowed with *pariprasnena* – honest enquiry. Otherwise I shall have to suffer.

So, "Physician, cure thyself," before you attempt to cure others. This is your primary duty; then you will really be able to offer others a cure-all.

In conclusion, my advice is that you should try to be submissive to the Vaisnava devotees. Submissiveness to them will promote your spiritual merit. We shall also pray to the Supreme Lord for such an attitude, "Oh Lord, my bad temperament stands in the way of my association with the devotees – please remove it."

The association with the devotees of the Lord is a primary necessity. It vastly improves our position with the Supreme if we always remain in prayer:
"Oh my Lord. This bad temperament in me, this inconsiderate thinking and feeling – sentiments concerning the outer world – this is disturbing my association with the higher Vaisnava devotees. They are the real source of improving our own inner wealth. So, please purify me by dismissing all these tendencies in my mind which the devotee section does not adore."
We shall always try to be in such a position that the servants of the Lord will like our company and service. They would utilize me for this is my primal necessity. If they do not

like my presence due to some contaminating disease or something, then it will be a loss to my spiritual life. So, we shall have to repent.

mat-tulyo nasti papatma, naparadhi ca kascana
parihare 'pi lajja me, kim bruve purusottama
Bhakti rasamrita sindhu 1.2.154

"If we slip and fall on the ground, then the ground is the only help by which we can stand erect; so we cannot leave the ground."
We shall sincerely pray, "Oh Lord, I am committing a mistake by disregarding You, ignoring You. I have no other alternative to get out of this disadvantage except by your help. I cannot correct myself. Under no condition can I leave you my Lord. If I commit mistake against You, an offence against You, still, only by Your help can I be purified. I have no other alternative. So, please forgive me and help me so that I may be saved by Your most intimate associates. It is so, because without their grace I may not be able to enter Your domain of Divine Love. It is only through the devotees that I may go. I have no other alternative. There are so many agents. If I am disappointed by one agent, then I may try another in a mild temperament – without speaking much against that previous party."

It is better that we consider ourselves to be faulty. To put blame on another's shoulder – that is ultimately not considered to be very happy or valuable. We should try and learn to blame ourselves. What is coming from outside I have no concern. The Lord can see and He sees everything. He is seeing who is responsible. But, I won't try to put the blame on others' shoulders. It will not be fruitful.

I shall gain if I can find fault within myself and not complain to others about the environment. The environment should be considered to be within His jurisdiction and it is really so. I am concerned with seeing the defect in myself only. If I attain success, I shall try to attribute it to others – to the grace of the devotees. If any failure, then I shall try to find the cause within myself. Through this process, we can make real valuable progress and that is the most universal process of progress – to find fault with our own selves. I am responsible for this disgraceful condition, but if there is any good, then that is coming from Him. He is All-Good, He is watching the environment and is in full control. So, this is included in Him, in God's party. One party, myself; another party, God's. He controls everyone and He is conscious of their activities.

This position would be very advisable. If without looking at the fault of others, I can search myself and find out that the fault is within me and not with them, then this is the key to success in spiritual life. *Srimad Bhagavatam* has advised us to go on this way. You will thrive, but when you are finding fault with others, then you will become a loser. This *sloka* from *Srimad Bhagavatam* is very effective, very true and safe in all respects. It is also His Grace to be able to see that the environment is always helpful to you – even in punishment. When the Mother is punishing the child, it is from the guardian's side – but it is for the good of the child.

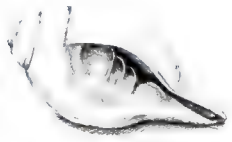
So, on the whole, the Lord and His paraphernalia are not vindictive. Yet the punishment comes – to correct you. They are fully aware of your defects and your real interest. They are

All-Affectionate. You are responsible. In this process, in time you will be purified to the highest degree. So, don't go to quarrel with the environment. That environment which you are presently facing, is a product of your own *karma*. You have acquired such environment according to your *karma*. So, the environment is produced by your own action. You cannot lodge any complaint against that as you yourself are responsible. This is true. If you can accept such a truth in your *sadhana* in this life, then in no time at all you shall prosper because Divine Grace will be attracted most intensely towards you.

om tad visno paramam padam sada,
pasyanti surayo diviva caksur-atatam
tad vipraso vipanyavo jagrvamsah,
samindhate visnor yat paramam padam
Rig Veda 1.22.20

"His vigilant eye, like the sun, is seeing everything and He is omniscient. His presiding guardian-eye over our heads is always looking for us."

We shall be able to draw His Sweet attention – His Divine Grace – towards us very soon if we take this miraculous process of seeing the defect within us – blaming ourselves and not the outside environment.



Chapter Five

Cheap Imitations versus Exclusive Devotion

Once we heard that Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was chanting the Holy Name and wandering in the sky according to his own sweet will. Suddenly he found that he was just near *Yamalaya*, where Yamaraja, the Lord of Death holds court to judge the sinners of this world. Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur also found present there Lord Brahma, Narada and others, discussing the meaning of two *slokas* spoken by Sri Krsna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, but they could not find any solution.

api cet suduracaro bhajate mam ananya bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah samyag vyavasito hi sah
Bhagavad-gita 9.30

"One who has devoted himself exclusively to Me, if he does any mischievous actions – sins – he should still be accepted. He should be judged as a righteous man, as honest as any other person. Although externally a person may commit many crimes, if he is exclusively given to My devotion, then he should be considered pure and spotless. He should be considered a saint. Whatever he does, he is doing cent-per-cent rightly."

ksipram bhavati dharmatma sasvac-chantim nigacchati
kaunteya pratijanihi na me bhaktah pranasyati
Bhagavad-gita 9.31

"Very soon he will become religious and will acquire real peace in his life. O son of Kunti, go and declare this to the public with firm determination. You may promise and give a guarantee to the public that My devotee never meets with destruction – they can never be ruined."

Yamaraja, Brahma and others could not find a solution to this point.

sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
Bhagavad-gita 18.66

"Giving up all sorts of duties, one may come to My feet. This is called *ananya bhajana*. One who has given up all different phases of duties and only accepts duties towards Me is My exclusive devotee." Now, after such exclusive duty, then he will again be seen as a dutiful man, an externally pious man, a *dharmatma*? This seems to be an anomaly. The meaning of *ananya bhajana* is that he will leave all sorts of duties – pure or impure – and come to My feet. Then, he will again become very saintly in his activity in the near future? What is the meaning of this?

At that time, they noticed that Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was moving in the sky and taking the Holy Name of the Lord. They said, "He is a pure devotee – not an ordinary devotee – and he has got deep knowledge of the scriptures. Let him come and explain this verse of *Bhagavad-gita*."

Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur was invited and went there to give the meaning of the *slokas*. Who will be pious, who is *dharmatma*? He who understands and declares this decision: "that an exclusive devotee of Krsna – whatever his outer practices may be – he is cent per cent saintly. He who understands and utters this principle will become *dharmatma* – he will be pious in the near future. The conclusion should be that he who declares that 'My exclusive devotee', despite his ill behaviour, is cent-per-cent saintly and, his statement is also cent-per-cent correct. So such a person will become very pure and very soon, he will also get the chance of accepting the path towards eternal Truth."

Sri Krsna said to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-gita*, "Take this advantage and go to the public. Declare with boldness that My devotee who is given wholly and exclusively towards Me – if apparently or outwardly he may be doing something wrong – he will never be destroyed. He will be saved, *na me bhaktah pranasyati*- No destruction is possible for My exclusive devotee, his life is insured. Go to the public and declare this and receive the benefit of becoming saintly. You will have the chance of acceptance of the path of spiritual eternal peace. It is so, because they have got that appreciation, that exclusive devotion for Me."

Everything is for Him and not for any other part. We may obey or disobey the laws of the provincial or separate interest. We may do or may not do, but we must obey the rule: everything is for Him. This is the main rule. All other rules are subsidiary. We may carry on or we may not carry on, but we must carry on our duty towards the centre.

This is the all-important factor in every case. One who can appreciate this and boldly asserts it to the public must have some substantial feeling in the matter. He is sure to survive to improve his future condition very soon. He will attain the path of eternal peace that is Myself. This is the underlying meaning.

sarva dharman parityajya mam ekam saranam vraja
Bhagavad-gita 18.66

This is the highest quality of every part of the whole. Everyone must be dedicated towards the centre, even crossing his dutifulness in respect to other environments. One who can feel this, appreciate this, and assert this, he will also very soon get such a position because of his inner heart's appreciation. He has some realization in this path and that will also come to be effected very soon. The public will see, "Oh! He is also coming to this path of *ananya bhajana*, exclusive adherence towards the call of the Absolute Centre and that is all-in-all."

Dharma means "moral duties to mother, country, society and humanity. But, neglecting all these duties, if one maintains a straight relationship with Me, then he is considered not to be committing any fault. He is in the line of exclusive devotion towards Me. He is doing rightly. One who can appreciate this, he will also very soon be converted to the same class. This is the verdict, the full meaning. Not only he who is following the exclusive devotional path, but who can appreciate this, he will also gain entrance in the path of exclusive devotion to the Lord. In the beginning of devotional practices, there may be some bad tendencies, but when the devotee matures, then all these different tendencies will automatically disappear. These unwanted tendencies may disappear or may not disappear, but service to the centre is the all-important factor for the devotee.

drstaih svabhava-janitair vapusas ca dosair
na prakrtatvam iha bhata-janasya pasyet
gangambhasam na khalu, budbuda-phena pankair
brahma-dravatvam apagacchati, nira-dharmaih
Sri Upadesamrta 6

Srila Rupa Goswami has given the example, "The Ganges water is sometimes seen to be externally filthy, but it never loses its purifying capacity. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water has got no connection with the external purifying capacity of the Ganges water."

In the same way, the devotees may have some physical or mental defects. However, devotee means, 'the *atma* – the soul'. In the *atma* – the innermost self – there is a purifying agent which is the purest normal factor of the world. "Whatever externally you may see in My exclusive devotees is like the foam and dirt in the Ganges water. The purifying capacity of the Ganges water cannot be disturbed by any foam or any dirt mixed with the water – that is something separate. The spiritual capacity does not depend in any way on this material, foreign capacity."
So, some devotees may be seen to be a little greedy and some a little easily excited. Physically, one may be blind, another may be deaf and another may be lame. But these external, apparent defects should not be considered because a devotee's saintly characteristic is independent of the physical and mental planes.

Extraordinary Exemplary Conduct

In Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's tour of South India, He met Vasudeva Vipra in Kurma Ksetra. He was a leper, but a great devotee. The leper, Vasudeva was also very exemplary in his physical conduct. If any worms fell on the ground from his sores, then he would put the worms back on the sores so they would not die. He was suffering from leprosy, but he was a devotee cent per cent. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu happily embraced him and his leprosy disappeared.
Also, when Srila Sanatana Goswami was coming back to Puri from Vrndavana, by the contact of bad water in the jungle, he contracted some sores on his body. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu used to welcome him but Sanatana Goswami would push back, "Don't touch me. This is the body of a sinful man with so many itches and sores that are oozing and emitting a bad odour. Don't touch me." Then one day, Sanatana Goswami disclosed, "I shall leave this place or I shall invite death by falling under the wheel of Lord Jagannath's cart." When Mahaprabhu heard of this He chastised Sanatana and then forcibly embraced him – all the good qualities came out immediately and the sores, etc. disappeared. Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu told, "Sanatana, you are a Vaisnava. Your body is not defective."

aprakrta-deha tomara 'prakrta' kabhu nayais

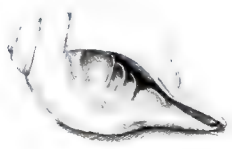
"I am a sannyasi. Krsna is testing Me to see whether I have got any difference in the discrimination of My dealings with the devotees. Whether I am seeing, 'this sore is here' or 'that defect is there', in the devotee and thereby avoid their company. Krsna is testing Me. It

is seen only for this purpose. Your body is already pure. Krsna has created this situation only to test the public. If I cannot see this, then I will be deceived by Krsna. So, it is nothing. It is a show, a mere show. Your body is pure and spotless. You are a Vaisnava, a devotee of Lord Krsna. This is only shown to serve some purpose of the divinity of Krsna. Wherever a devotee's saintly devotion is present, such things cannot stand. Only to test My devotion, Krsna has sent you to Me in this condition."

He embraced Srila Sanatana Goswami and showed that he is cent-per-cent devotee.
These circumstances may or may not occur, but still the principle is that our service, our wholesale dutifulness towards Krsna is our primal necessity. In the ordinary sense, the *Gopis* are also considered to be sinners. They are crossing the laws of the society and the scriptures so they are considered sinners. However, they hold the highest position of purity as a result of their exclusive devotion towards Krsna and no other – even at the risk of repeatedly crossing societal standards of morality. They cannot check themselves due to their extreme hankering to serve Krsna cent-per-cent.
Therefore, the *Gopis* are considered to be in the highest devotional mood. But this sort of devotion is not cheap. Persons of this world may take advantage of these very high ideals, but that will not be beneficial for them. Devotion must be there to a substantial degree. It is not by cheap imitation that anyone will pass in the name of exclusive devotion to the Lord. That is *sahajiya* – imitation – and cannot be allowed.

We should not be too particular about the conduct of other devotees as we lose our own time and energy – and it is also reactionary. "If I try to find fault with anyone, then that same fault will come back to me; and this is especially true in the devotee section. By chewing the poison in his body, that same poison will come back to me." So we should avoid that and try to find the good qualities in others as that will also be of help to us.
There was a system in our *math* at the time of our Guru Maharaj. Our Guru Maharaj used to order openly in an assembly that one devotee would stand and praise the good qualities of another selected devotee whom he especially did not like. So, he forced the critic to find out where the goodness lies in that devotee whom he did not like. By finding out the good qualities in him, that helped the critic to eliminate the bad things in his conception. He will search after that which is good and thereby, he will be benefited.

There should be no culture of any misconception, especially in the devotees because Krsna has taken full charge of those who are surrendered souls. So whatever is good and bad there in the devotees, it is His responsibility. Any fault or evil in a devotee may disappear at any time or Krsna may continue that tendency there in order to serve some purpose. We are to see like that. Therefore, we must not go to criticize those who are directly under the charge of Krsna or we shall be in great difficulty. We should try to find out what is good in them for that will help us a great deal. This is not a theoretical thing but these are the most practical topics.



Chapter Six

Service is Self-Giving

Learn to give yourself. Learn to die the so-called death – embrace at every second. In this political and social world, everything is done at the cost of life. In every duty, at every step, they are ready to give up their lives for that "do or die" conception. If one accepts such a principle of life, he is sure to progress. And his progress will be very, very intense. "Do or Die" – you are to live with such an attitude. At every point, you are ready to do anything at the cost of your life. You will be a great success if you serve with this spirit at heart. When you are approaching that special spiritual substance, that high spiritual life, then you are to invite death at every point of your life. The most intense desire to give yourself is 'do or die' at every point in giving your life. The guarantee is, "I shall attain that or I shall die."

You are to approach the Divine Sound, the Holy Name, with this spirit of self-giving. "No giving, no getting; no risk, no gain." If you want to give with such intensified nature, then you will be adored as a candidate, a bona fide candidate of that spiritual world. So, self-giving is necessary. Service means self-giving, self-dedication. That should be our attitude to approach the higher plane. Then, all the coatings of the material ego will vanish one by one, and the genuine substance from within will come out and select its own soil. "This is my home, this is my sweet home."

So many coverings are causing deviation in different directions. These foreign things are taking us far, far away from our *svarupa*, that noble self of a servant in the highest plane of the whole organism. The beautiful is playing and dancing in His own Sweetness and Affection. We can reach Him there, but we have to follow this course of 'do or die' at every moment. Through self-giving, we can acquire our fortune and not by sitting in one place and collecting information of different locales. What utility we can get, what benefit we can derive from collecting such information? As a master, I am sitting in my room, in my chair, and I will gather different facts to be utilized for my self-interest. This kind of mentality is not acceptable.
The process of self-giving is given by Srila Rupa Goswami:

adau sraddha tatah, sadhu-sanga 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah
athasaktis tato bhavas tatah pramabhyudancati
sadhakanam ayam premnah pradurbhave, bhavet kramah
Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 4.15.16

Adau sraddha means to go forth with this faith at every point in your life. I don't mean to say 'Do or die' in the physical sense. Of course, what I am referring to is in the internal sense (the ego).

Bhajana kriya is self-giving with the spirit of 'do or die' – self-giving, inner self-giving, ego-giving. If you can adopt this process, then the undesirable things within you will disappear very easily and quickly. Then, *nistha*, you will find a continuous connection with this sort of principle in your life. This principle will always act continuously in you, and the other fleeting

mean desires will not be able to approach you or touch you. Then, you will find *ruci*, a taste – a real taste for that most charming substance. Otherwise, before that continuous connection with Him, whatever taste we think we possess, is all treachery. That is not the real taste.

We want twenty-four hours' continuous connection with that charming substance. Real taste will come after that continuous twenty-four hours' connection in divine thought of Him. We can rely on that taste. The taste we may find in other positions is not reliable. The taste that comes after twenty-four hours' connection, eliminating all other charms of this world, is reliable. That *ruci* – that taste will guide us. Then, *asakti*, then *bhava* – there are so many signs when you get to that *bhava* stage. This *bhava bhakti* expresses itself as a ray of the sun of *prema*. In this way we are to progress through the process of self-giving.

Our Guru Maharaj especially stressed this point and attracted us to this way of progress. No imitation is allowed as it produces no good effect. Imitation will last for some time, then some offences will be created and that will be a disqualification. This will slow down the process of progress in self-giving and may bring it to a complete stop. If we are taken to the examiner, and we get a stamp of disqualification, then that will hamper our future progress. So, *aparadha*, offence – we must be very careful about this. This is recorded as a discredit, a disqualification in that circle. The examiners will give a stamp of disqualification, and that is *aparadha* – a criminal offence. It makes us unfit and will go against us. Therefore, we shall be very cautious, very careful not to commit any offence – not to imitate a higher state of devotion than our actual station. Rather, we shall remain as newcomers, always seeking a new introduction. There is real danger in a criminal record that will go against us. We must always be careful to protect ourselves from committing any offence against the devotees. This will slow down our spiritual progress.

Learning the Gift of Giving Yourself

We must be very, very careful when we follow the highest object of our eternal life. Our Guru Maharaj gave a special warning – "*sevon mukhe*". We were not allowed to read much – even these ordinary subjects dealing with *sadhana*, devotional practices – what to speak of the higher literatures. But we were encouraged by "*sravanam-kirtanam*," hearing from the real source and acting accordingly. In this way, by serving, learn to give yourself properly. There are different methods of service: *sravanam*, hearing; *kirtanam*, chanting; *smaranam*, remembering; and *vandanam*, praying, etc. Then, Srila Rupa Goswami has mentioned sixty-four kinds of devotional practices and it is further mentioned a thousand kinds of devotional practices.

But practices are not very important. The very life of the practice is all-important and that is self-dedication, self-giving. So, be very particular to learn dedication and self-giving. This means practically to work under the guidance of a Vaisnava devotee – getting ready to work under a proper agent. This will help you a great deal to learn, to practice what is dedication to that Sweet Lord. Guidance must come from those above you. It is very rare, but it is most valuable to us. Whatever directions are coming from above, we must selflessly embrace that as all in all. This is the clue; this is the key to the Hidden Treasures in your heart. I will not work with my whims or serve men on my level. But we shall very eagerly obey what

directions will come from the above plane. This is service proper and it will be a real help for progressing on the path of dedication and self-giving.

One day, in the last days of our Guru Maharaj, he said to one sannyasi who had led a full twenty years of service in the mission, "You did not see me. You could not see who I am. Like a zamindar you have kept some householder servitors under you and from time to time, you try to give something from them to me. You have become a broker. You are keeping something under you and now and then, you try to give some contribution from them to me. You are a broker, but you should be wholesale mine – my agent. Whatever service you do in this world, you do on my behalf as you are only my agent. But you are not doing according to this truth. You are dependent on those householders while keeping a connection with me. This is not necessary. You are not a member of this world. You are mine alone. Whatever I say, you should do that and do not sell yourself to any proposal of this world. You are wholesale my servant."
What is necessary for our progress is very rarely to be found. It comes form a higher plane and we must surrender ourselves to substantiate that reality within us.

viracaya mayi dandam dinabandho dayam va
gatir iha na bhavattah kacid anya mamasti
nipatatu sata-kotir nirbharam va navambhas
tad api kila payodah stuyate catakena

"The Cataka bird is a kind of bird that drinks only rain water from above. This class of bird is always looking high in the sky for rain drops to fall. There may be much water available here on the ground, but this bird will not take a drop. They are waiting for that rain water which comes from above. Sufficient rain water may come, or thunder may come, but still they will not take a single drop from the earth."

Our attitude should be like this. Whatever directions will come from above for us to do, we shall take that on our heads as our life and soul. But we shall never take any plan from this mundane world. The Director, the Master, the Lord is there and I am connected with Him. This sort of practice is helpful. We may take the Holy Name, or hear the devotional musical chants, but the very life will be that it is coming from the above place; and I am carrying out that order. In this way, I may be taken above to the higher planes. I shall be directed to the higher layers and I may go there eternally. I am preparing myself only to carry out this spotless, uncoloured order and surrender without any questioning. If we are sure it is coming from the higher layer, then we shall live selflessly at His disposal. We want selfless service to the higher and not to any mundane source. This is what is necessary for real progress in the line of self-dedication and self-giving. This is service. Many signs and symptoms are there to indicate the higher directions descending from *Gurudeva*. We shall whole-heartedly embrace the directions given by *Gurudeva*.

Truth cannot come within our jurisdiction

The sum and substance is that by obeying the directions from the Higher, we can make progress towards the higher planes. By serving the Higher, we can hope to be selected by the

Higher. We may then be taken up into that higher layer if we are considered qualified through our dedication. If we want to go towards that high, high super-conscious region, then this is the process of self-giving that will be the main tenure of our lives.

Revealed truth is necessary. No intelligence or reason can be applied here. If we apply any reason, then we will be nowhere. A man who is expert in argument will defeat another man not so qualified in argument, but the truth remains regardless. Intellect and reason have no position there because truth, super-consciousness and dedication do not come within the jurisdiction of intellect, logic and reason.
We can invite that High Guest only by serving, by honouring, by self-giving, by heart-giving and never otherwise.

It is not possible to enforce, to capture or to encase Him by any intrigue or by any conspiracy. This will have the opposite effect. This is considered as Satan in another colour. God realization means *saranagati*, self-surrender unto Him. We can approach Him not only through self-abnegation, but with deep self-surrender. This self-surrender, *saranagati*, will take us in connection with the higher, nobler substance. This self-surrender, self-giving is to be cultivated at all cost. Service is to God, and not to *maya*, misconception. We must be very careful that we are not serving maya in a charming form. In the form of god - in a godly form – some *maya* is coming to take us away from our service. So, in our present position, we must very carefully consider the propriety of our service – that to whom we are giving that service are not themselves, serving *maha-maya*.

Try to connect where you are never the master

So, *jnane prayasam udapasya namanta eva*, "To hatefully give up all proposals that the intellect will offer to you. To hatefully throw out what your intellect will come to propose to you. What the intellect will be able to judge and accept or not accept, that must be of a lower type. So, summarily you are to reject that and understand you must bow down your head, *namanta eva*. We are to approach the higher substance in this way."

The beginning of your real self-interest is to bow down your head, capturing your heart automatically. Try to connect with that section where you will always be with folded palms as a servant and never as a master. Such abnegation, such courage of self-giving is necessary if you want to live in the higher plane. Otherwise, you will become a master and reign in hell. In Satan's words, "It is better to reign in hell than to serve in heaven." But, in wholesale self-giving, just the opposite is necessary.

Even tears and cries will have no value if the inner tendency of self-giving is not awakened there. "*Seva* – service, is self-giving" – this is the main principle of life in the devotee. *This self-giving is really meant towards the higher planes and not here and there around us in this mortal world.* Otherwise, in another way, this self-giving tendency may be captured by the hateful things of this perishable world. *Jnana*, knowledge, is supposed to be very, very pure and free from doubt. In the majority of persons, knowledge is considered very innocent as it does not mix with these gross material things. The higher personalities consider knowledge to be very pure, very innocent and spotless. But, if this knowledge is not connected with Krsna, then it must be hatefully rejected.

In *Srimad-Bhagavatam* it is written:

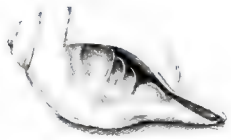
naiskarmyam apy acyuta-bhava-varjitam
na sobhate jnanam alam niranjanam
Srimad Bhagavatam 1.5.12

"Knowledge is widely considered as pure, innocent and spotless. But if it is not connected with the Positive Absolute Good, then it is your enemy and it will devour you."

You are to consider like that, then you will become a qualified candidate. This is *jnana-sunya-bhakti*, self-surrender (*saranagati*), is so pure that even connection with knowledge that is considered to be very innocent and spotless is also hatefully rejected. Such a degree of self-surrender is necessary for the higher association of devotion proper. *Jnana-karmady-anavrtam*, the charm of material acquisition and the charm of mastery, of knowing everything are both rejected. We do not know anything in the Infinite, even in magnitude or quality. We cannot know anything in the infinite. It is a flow of autocracy. What can we know?

Knowledge means not to store so many false incidents and sell them to the world for some name and fame. No! That is to be hatefully rejected – given up. But, service – unconditional self-giving – is noble and will take you to the higher, super-conscious region. *Jnana* and *karma* are both discouraged. We are discouraged from handling matter and knowledge. Knowledge will not apply in that plane of dedication. That is the plane of Absolute Will, the flow of Absolute Autocracy and no rule or regulation can work there. So, false gathering, false storing has got no value there – no market value. Indeed, no market is there! Therefore, only by self-surrender, self-giving will you have such high quality of devotion. So, a serving, a self-giving attitude is our friend. We are a unit of serving attitude and service means to surrender to the Higher. The Higher means, 'uncontaminated with material and intellectual acquisition.' This sort of higher devotion swiftly carries us to His Divine Abode where love, beauty and charm reign supreme.

March towards universal good wherever and whoever you are. Turn your face towards Him and march remembering that Sweet Absolute Krsna.



Chapter Seven

The Family of God

Whenever difficulties come in one's devotional life, he must search for the remedy. If there is any realization, he will try his best to have favourable association. Suppose by accident, one has lost his senses on the street. Whenever his consciousness returns, he will ask his approaching friends, "Take me to my home where they will take care of me." Whatever little consciousness comes in a person who is incapacitated by an accident, he will say, "Take me to my home. My home is there." And there again, he may lose external consciousness. Similarly, whenever this consciousness of laziness creeps within us, we must try to seek out higher associates – devotees that know the value of our tender devotion. They will take care of us like a guardian.

In this line, the devotees are guardians, as they know the value of devotion. Therefore, when I am going to lose devotion, when a little sense comes to me, then I shall try to extricate myself, and progress towards the devotee camp. They know the value of my little spark of devotion and they will take care of me. Only association can help us. When we become helpless, association will help us. We shall try our best to go to that association who knows the value of the devotion we hanker for. How faith comes? That is from *sukrti, jnatva sukrti, ajnatva sukrti*. "Wandering in this world, my energy is consciously and unconsciously utilized by the devotees, the agents of God for His service."
Reality is for Himself and we think we are for ourselves. When an agent transfers our self-tendency into "Reality for Himself", that produces some *sukrti* in us. This tendency, when accumulated, produces faith, and faith can develop mainly through *sadhu-sanga* – the association of the devotees and also, the scriptures to some extent.

First, when the child is born, he may not cooperate with the mother, but depends on her. Then when the child develops a little, he comes to cooperate more and more. He cries when hungry. When more grown, then he demands, "I want milk, I want this and that." Practical cooperation for health will come according to growth, and when under-grown (when our growth is stunted), then of course, he has to depend on the agents of the Lord that are moving here and there. That is automatic.

Jnana-sunya-bhakti

Jnana-sunya-bhakti is like a department of the government where the pension is being given to those who have got no service and no livelihood, etc. In this way, the agents of the Lord are moving, creating and utilizing the energy of those needy persons unconsciously by putting it in the "For Itself and By Itself" direction. They get something in remuneration and unconsciously that is being developed into *sukrti* in them. Then, gradually, this comes to faith, service towards the Infinite, the Unknowable – Adhoksaja, which is beyond the jurisdiction of our experience. This is substance existing beyond the jurisdiction of our experience.

Knowledge and consciousness descend from above. But all the knowledge of our experience in this world cannot reach or attract that unknown and unknowable region. Unknown and unknowable to us, but many things can exist there which are beyond our reach. So, finite and

infinite live in such a relationship that mainly, everything is dependent on the infinite. Generally, we find that there is very little chance in life for this finite to take the mercy of the infinite. So Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura prays:

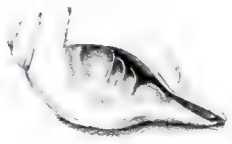
vicarite aobi, guna nahi paobi krpa kara chodata vicara
Saranagati

"Oh Lord! If you deal with me according to justice, then I have no hope. For a long time, I have committed innumerable offences at Your feet. To clear out my past misdeeds, I have come to Your "Window of Mercy" to pray – without consideration of my past or future – that you may please extend Your Causeless Grace upon this fallen soul. In this life, I have got no hope. Prabhu! I surrender to You. Whatever You like You may do with me. I have no hope if you give admission to the "Window of Justice": I am lost for there is no possibility of my admission."

This is the way to attain our highest prospect. This has been advised from the school of devotion. To approach that department, you have to surrender completely and you will have a bright prospect. The devotees, the agents of that department, have come to preach to us – to canvass, "Approach that department of mercy and do not go for justice – otherwise, you will be the loser. Surrender completely and when His causeless benediction will come down to you, you will be amply rewarded. Direct yourself to that which has no bounds, no limits – approach that department." This is *suddha-bhakti*.

While falling flat at His Holy Feet, we are to surrender. If not, then I am continuing the war against the Absolute. This world of experience I am living in – it means, "I am at war with the Absolute vibration by creating different types of vibrations against the universal vibration." These vibrations are coming in contact with one another and are being crushed and evaporated into nowhere – they cannot stand. When coming to clash with the absolute vibration, then everything – anything – is reduced to ashes. That has got no beginning; it has got no ending.

That fundamental vibration of love, sympathy, beauty and charm may be like motherly affection to a child. Even more than that, it may be the love of consorthood in its highest perfection – a twenty-four hour engagement in the "Family of God".



Chapter Eight

The Extra-Ordinary Plane of Experience

When performing *bhajana* and *kirtana*, what should be the colour of our attitude? Meditation of a formal nature does not have much affect here. We shall try *saranagati* –surrender. Our whole attention should be concentrated on surrender.

Once, a gentleman, a zamindar, took *Harinama* initiation from our Guru Maharaja and asked, "While I count on the beads, what should I think of in my mind? Is there any portrait of Krsna or *Sri Murti*? How can I engage and utilize my mind at that time while counting the beads?"

Our Guru Maharaj answered, "The mind has nothing to do in the supra-mental area. The mind is like a vulture. As a vulture goes to the cremation ground, so mind and other senses will try to fall there and make it mundane – a cremation ground. This is all mortal. They have got all mortal experience. The mind, the eye, the ear, etc. – everything has got mortal experience." So, whenever you take the Holy Name, the other senses, including the mind, will try to make it a mortal field with their prejudices and experiences of this mortal world. They fall on it and make it a cremation ground. Do not allow it. Instead, we must try to understand, "I have got some spiritual sound which is completely different from this mortal world, and that sound will gradually evolve a spiritual figure or colour."

The Stage of Transcendental Waiting

Srila Jiva Goswami says, after receiving the spiritual sound from *Gurudeva*, and concentrating on the Holy Name, then, there is a stage of transcendental waiting. How the effects of the spiritual sound will come down to us? We shall go on counting the beads with such expectant attitude. We shall never feel ourselves down in this mundane world, but rather expecting some new transcendental experience at every moment. Then the colour will completely come, the *rupa*, the form will come; from *rupa* will come *guna*, the quality. These will come down from above, from the plane of *Paramatma*. The ordinary plane of experience, the mental plane, the plane of reason, the plane of soul, the plane of Super-soul (*paramatma*) – in this way the planes from gross to subtle are there. So, it will come down: it will have to come with my expectant attention.

For example, a particular kind of bird always expects rain – the Cataka. They do not take any water form the ground – neither river nor lake – nothing of the kind. Only rainwater will they take. Similarly, our attitude should be like that. Always in expectation for some transcendental experience, we shall go on searching. First, the sound, from the sound comes form, from the form comes quality; from that relativity, the paraphernalia will come. Then the pastimes will come and we shall find ourselves as a unit in that plane. It is not this mundane self, but my soul has got a serving position in there – in that plane. In this way, we are to be reinstated in our original spiritual position. So, the mind cannot be allowed to engage in its own speculative line in this case.

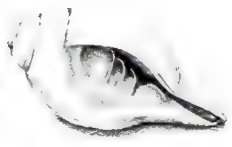
The line of service is always given in this way: do your service under a bona fide devotee (*guru*). Whatever you do, get your direction from the higher agents and you will be benefited. It is said that raw materials in the hand of an expert can produce miracles. Otherwise, raw materials are useless. So, you have got raw materials – spiritually unrefined – and you want spiritual growth. The higher and proper utilization of those assets is necessary and that guidance can come from the transcendental arena. As much as higher direction will come, we shall be prepared to surrender at their disposal. We shall be more benefited in this super-scientific line. Whatever is done under the direction of the devotees that has got transcendental value – that will be progressive within me. I am leading myself by following the order of a Vaisnava.

Centralization is necessary – we must be Krsna centralized. At present we are already different, partially centralized; but all must be for the Centre. One conclusion – all is ending in Krsna. All is moving towards Krsna's satisfaction. So, this ego must be dissolved and we shall try that within the Krsna Centre. The example is there. This is the positive side. We are to find out within us. So, take the Holy Name and hear *Srimad Bhagavatam*. There may be *dharma, artha, kama* and *moksa* according to its purpose. But when they are performed only for the interest of Krsna, then it becomes *bhakti*, devotion.

I am not reading this book to attain fame by delivering lectures to the public. In such a case, it will not be devotion to read the book. I am reading the book because my higher master wants me to do this. This line should be found and should be followed. Whatever I am doing is not for my interest but for the interest of my master. Whatever I do, that will have spiritual guidance which will make it progress towards Krsna, towards the Centre and the Central interest. We shall try to do everything in this way. Otherwise, taking the name and studying the scriptures may also be false – if it is not for the Central interest. Selfish interest may also use all those devotional forms.

Some will be *sahajiyas*, imitationists, some will be traders and they will each have a reaction. For the interest of the Krsna conception, the imperative necessity – the exclusive necessity – is that we should come in contact with a real Vaisnava who has got Krsna's interest at heart. Wholesale converted to Krsna Consciousness – Krsna Consciousness means Krsna centered – for the satisfaction of Krsna. Everyone is searching after some separate satisfaction and running after that in different shades of life. We are to eliminate that and accept this – wholesale conversion towards only satisfying Him.

And who is He? He is *svarat*, the Autocrat, the despot. The highest conception of the Truth is Absolute good. No consideration of this world can come to that standard. Absolute good is such. Autocracy must be with the Absolute good the Holiest conception imaginable. Absolute good has full power there. No law can bind Him, that would be suicidal. *Svarat* means Autocrat. He Himself is Emperor without apparently allowing consideration for another.



Chapter Nine

The Principle Guide In Service

tvam gopika vrsaraves tanayantike 'si
sevadhikarini guro nija-pada padme
dasyam pradaya kuru mam vraja-kanane sri-
radhangri-sevana-rase sukhinim sukhabdhe

The word *Gopi* refers to Radharani or may also refer to Sri Rupa Manjari Gopi or Sri Lalita Gopi. All of them are trouped as *Gopis*. The disciple will be grouped into a particular camp of service according to his inner tendency. When the highest position is attained, *guru* is meant there as the principal guide in service.

We shall be in *madhurya-rasa*, and they are all helping in the service of Srimati Radharani. They are all leaders. There are also different departments, where we are posted, and the head of that department is our *Guru*.

So the prayer to *Sri Guru* should be: "Oh my *Guru*, you are a *Gopi*. You are Srimati Radharani's intimate servitor. You make me happy by giving facility for my service towards Her. You are always under Srimati Radharani's direction. You please give me the facility that I can render service acceptable by Srimati Radharani.

You are always adjacent to Vrsabhanu's daughter, Srimati Radharani. You are entrusted with responsible service for Srimati Radharani. You are allowed to partake there in Her service. You please engage me also in that service. You are continuously giving supply to the service of Srimati Radharani. Kindly engage me there!
You are always nearby our great Srimati Radharani. You always have engagement in Her service. Please allow me to partake in that service to the very beautiful, ecstatic, sweet lotus-like Divine Feet of Srimati Radharani. Give me a chance to be accepted there in Her service."

The difficulty is that the position of *guru* varies. According to one's inner innate nature of service, the immediate leader is *guru*. So, *guru* is generally *rupanuga*. We must serve under the direction of Sri Rupa Manjari. Sri Rupa Manjari is the leader of the junior school of *Gopis*.
The senior section sometimes cannot enter when Radha and Krsna are alone. They keep aloof at that time of intimacy. But, the junior section can enter there at that time to render some confidential service. The junior section in one way, receives the highest benefit. So, this is the *rupanuga sampradaya*, the spiritual succession of Sri Rupa. Sri Rupa is under Sri Lalita who is a senior *Gopi* exclusively devoted to Srimati Radharani. Sometimes the senior friends cannot go to the camp when Radha and Krsna are alone.

The junior section can approach at that time and render confidential service. The leader of the most confidential circle is Sri Rupa Manjari. Sri Rupa, our *Gurudeva*, is one and the same with Sri Rupa Manjari in *madhurya-rasa*. Similarly, in *sakhya-rasa*, Sudama and Subala are in the middle as a group. The *Guru* conception will vanish there in Subal or Baladeva in *sakhya-rasa*. Also, the same principle applies in *dasya-rasa* and *vatsalya-rasa*. In this way,

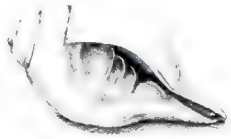
the leaders are with particular positions and according to our inner capacity, we shall be fixed there in loving service. We shall do our service under their direction. This is the principle of *Guru* there.

Who is *Guru*?

On all sides there are *Gurus* who are helping us towards the Krsna conception. Who is *Guru*? *Guru*'s function is to help us towards Krsna consciousness, Krsna's service.
Everything is *Guru*, even the trees and the sand, the dust of that holy land. They are all reminding, helping us, in our service. But, the main *guru* will be that special leading officer just over me where I am posted, that permanent guiding officer, there stands the position of my *guru*.
Our Guru Maharaj used to say, "If we can cast a deeper glance into the higher, then we can see that *guru* means Srimati Radharani. *Guru* is one and the same with Srimati Radharani.

ektu ucchu hoye dekhe – radharani purna asta nayaka
bhave seva karen, anyanya sakhigani

Our Guru Maharaj, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupad confided in us, "My *Guru* is Sri Guna Manjari. I know if I can have a deeper vision of my *Gurudeva*. I can see her fully identified with Srimati Radharani. What else is there? No space between – rather, Srimati Radharani in Her fullest mood is perfectly focused in the heart of my *Gurudeva*. Clearly I can see that. I don't know any other."



Chapter Ten

The *Brahma Gayatri*

Srila Bhakti Raksak Sridhar Maharaj got his sacred thread in the family tradition when he was fourteen years of age. He received one book where it was mentioned that if one can chant the Gayatri mantra 432 times daily, he can achieve many spiritual benefits. Srila Guru Maharaj embraced that suggestion wholeheartedly with the culminated understanding that Sri Gayatri Herself is conscious spirit and not mere words and oral vibrations. He tried his best to understand the revealed truth – without consulting dictionaries or books on grammar – and he would feel some prakasa, some light of truth, coming from the divine incantation of Sri Gayatri Mantra. With that inspiration, he penned an expansive glorification of Sri Gayatri Devi that is herein presented in the following Sanskrit verse:

Sri Gayatri-nirglitartham

bhvades tat savitur varenya-vihitam ksetra-jna sevyarthakam
bhargo vai vrsabhanu-jatma-vibhavaikaradhana sri-puram

bhargo jyotir achintya lilana-sudhaikaradhana sri-puram
bhargo dhama-taranga-khelana-sudhaikaradhana sri-puram
bhargo dhama sada-nirasta-kuhakam prajna-lila-puram

devasyamrta-rupa-lila-rasadheraradha-dhih prerinah
devasyamrta-rupa-lila-purusasyaradha-dhih presinah
devasya dhuti-sundaraika-purusasyaradhya-dhih presinah

gayatri-muralista-kirtana-dhanam radha-padam dhimahi
gayatri-gaditam mahaprabhu-matam radha-padam dhimahi
dhir aradhanam eva nanyad iti tad radha-padam dhimahi

The Elaborate Commentary of *Gayatri Mantra*

The meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri* must come in the same line as the full-fledged conception of *Srimad Bhagavatam* or equivalent. The *Gayatri Mantra* and the *Srimad Bhagavatam* are one and the same. *Srimad Bhagavatam* is the elaborate commentary of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The meaning of the *Gayatri* must therefore come in line with *Srimad Bhagavatam*. How is this possible? The intermediate steps are supplied in supportive *sastra* revealing that the meaning of *Gayatri* is non-different from *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

artho 'yam brahma-sutranam, bharatartha-vinirnayah
gayatri-bhasya-rupo 'sau, vedartha-paribrmhitah
Garuda Purana & Hari-Bhakti-Vilasa 10.39

What is the meaning of *Gayatri*? It means in Sanskrit, *ganat trayate,* "A particular kind of song which gives us salvation, relief and emancipation." *Gayatri* is called "*Veda-Mata*" – the

Mother of the *Vedas* – as *Gayatri* has produced the entire *Veda*. The first emanation is the transcendental syllable *Om* (*omkara pranava*) then comes the *Gayatri*, the *Vedas*, the *Vedanta-Sutras* and then finally, the *Srimad Bhagavatam* – the mature fruit of all *Vedic* conclusions. The meaning, the purport of the *Gayatri Mantra* is found in the full-fledged conception of the *Srimad Bhagavatam*. This Krsna conception of Godhead is the highest. *Gayatri* must give us this meaning. How to extract the Krsna conception from *Gayatri*? This is the present objective placed before us. How to extract *Srimad Bhagavatam*, the Krsna conception, from within the womb of *Gayatri*? The *Gayatri Mantra* must say that there is Krsna consciousness within her womb and that should be drawn out.

I heard that Srila Jiva Goswami had given such a meaning but I could not find it. I heard that he had extended the meaning of *Gayatri* leading to Krsna consciousness but I could not discover that anywhere. However, the search itself prompted me to draw the meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra* towards Krsna consciousness and so, I did it in that way.

The Objective of Life: Self-Determination

The general meaning of *Gayatri* is, "That song which grants us emancipation – liberation. Liberation must have meaning in the positive line. Liberation does not only mean, "to be free from the negative side," but continued positive attainment. The definition of true emancipation in *Srimad Bhagavatam* is positive attainment.

muktir hitvanyatha rupam svarupena vyavasthitih

"It is not only to attain freedom from the negative side, but *Srimad Bhagavatam* gives the positive attainment." Until and unless we attain "our" positive position (the highest possible), true liberation is not effected. A mere withdrawal from the negative side cannot be said to be liberation proper. Hegel said, "The object of our life is self-determination." We must determine our normal function in the organic whole. Not mere emancipation from the negative side, but our participation in the positive function which is considered to be the highest attainment for us. This is only possible through service in the land of dedication. This is the true meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra*.

The word, "*Gayatri*" comes from two Sanskrit words – *ganat* and *trayate*. *Trayate* means "Positive attainment to the final stage (*svarupena vyavasthitih*)". We are to take this meaning. *Ganat* means, "Not mere sound, but musical sound." This musical sound draws us to Mahaprabhu's *sankirtana* that carries the touch of the flute of Krsna. We find divine sound and music there. Now we shall analyze what is the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*.

om bhur bhuvah svah, tat savitur varenyam
bhargo devasya dhimahi, dhiyo yo nah pracodayat

Om is the seed *mantra* which contains everything within it. *Bhur* is where we are – the world of our experience, the world of our sense perception. *Bhuvah* is at the back of that – our mental acquisition. The effect of our mental acquisition takes us to our present position of experience. It is not by accidental existence that we are here in this world of our experience. We have acquired such a position by our previous *karma*. And the area of our previous *karma*

is called *bhuvah-loka. Bhuvah-loka* is the mental sphere. This physical sphere is only an outcome of that mental sphere. The present world of experience is the product of our previous mental impulses.

Svar means *Bhuddhi-loka*, the plane of decision-making. What to do? What not to do? What I like; what I dislike. This is called *sankalpah/vikalpah*. I like this; I don't like that – this is the soil of the mental world of acceptance and rejection. You may like to do something, but you may not do that – otherwise you will be a loser. This faculty of reason is *svar-loka*. In this way, in this mundane world, there are different planes of existence – *Bhur-, Bhuvah-, Svah-, Mahar-, Jana-, Tapah-* and *Satya-loka*. The negative side has got these seven planes of life from *Bhur-loka* up to *Satya-loka* where the creator, Lord Brahma lives. The master of the whole world of experience of the negative side lives in *Satya-loka*. The four Kumaras – devotees who hold high positions as saints – also reside in *Satya-loka*.

These seven layers of the material world, from the gross to the subtle, are dealt with in detail in Srila Sanatana Goswami's *Brhat Bhagavatamrtam*. The negative side, consisting of the combination of the three modes of material nature that produces this world, finishes in *Satya-loka*. Then begins *Viraja*, the verge of the equilibrium of the negative side – the last limit of material consciousness. And the verge of equilibrium of the positive side is *Brahmaloka*, the beginning of the "Land of Service" – the equipoised verge of the positive world. Then, the world of reality, the world of dedication and service, the soul's world proper, begins there in *Siva-loka* and continues further in the plane of Vaikuntha. The devotee, Siva, then Sri Narayana in the Vaikunthas. In this way, they develop into *Krsna-loka*, Vrndavan. The seven planes that are represented in the *Gayatri Mantra* by *Bhur, Bhuvah* and *Svah*, are summarized in one word – *tat*.

Savitur means Surya, the sun. Sun means figuratively, 'that which illuminates all objects.' This – the three gross and subtle strata of the world – is shown to us by a particular light. What is that? That is *jivatma* – the soul. The sun does not show us the world, but the soul's influence does. It is not the sun, but it is really the soul that shows us this world. In *Bhagavad-gita* we find, *ekah krtsnam lokam imam ravih*: "This world is really being expressed to us by the *atma*, the soul which is just like the sun. The sun can show us the colour-world, the ear can reveal the sound-world, the sense of touch can reveal the touch-world, etc. However, in the centre is the soul who gives us an understanding of the environment, the world of perception. This perception is possible only because of the soul. The soul is like the sun as it is showing everything – *tat savitur*.

To summarize, all these seven strata of our experience are reduced to one word, *tat* – that. Who is showing us "that"? The illuminator – the sun is showing us. "Sun" here means soul. The soul means not the "universal soul", but the "individual soul". The individual soul is the cause of the world. "It is not that the mind is in the world, but that the world is in the mind," said Berkeley. The world is in the mind. Everything is also in the sun. Whatever we see – that is in the sun. The sun can show us everything. If there is no sun, then everything is dark and we cannot see anything. The soul is light, the subject, and the objects are these seven planes of experience. If the *atma* – the soul – withdraws, then everything is gone. This kind of consciousness gives birth to the path leading to Goloka.

Varenyam means *puja*, worshipable, venerable and reverential. Our soul is venerable. The soul is the subject and this world is its object. However, there is another domain that is venerated and worshiped by the soul. This is the Supersoul, *Paramatma* area. "*Bhargo*".
Bhargo means the Super-subjective area where the Supersoul, the Super-subject resides.
Bhargo means:

dhamna svena sada nirasta-kuhakam satyam param dhimahi

In the first verse of *Srimad Bhagavatam* it is mentioned that here we are going to deal with another world, by whose rays all misconceptions are brushed aside. In its own pristine glory, it shows the very abode of the Lord. I am talking about that world. So, the subject is the soul, and the object is the world of mundane experience. And the subject's venerable area that is superior to the subject – the soul – is that Super-subjective area.

Bhargo means, "More subtle than the soul, and holding more important position that the *jiva*-soul." That is the Supersoul area. *Bhargo* means in general, ordinary light. But, really it is the Supersoul Who can see and can show everything in more detail. Just as an X-ray can show us what the ordinary eye cannot see, so *bhargo*, the *svarupa-sakti*, the higher more powerful light, can also reveal the soul. Then *bhargo* belongs to whom? It belongs to *Deva*, pertaining to *Deva*.

Devasya means belonging to *Deva*. What is the meaning of *Deva*? *Deva* means, "Who is very beautiful and playful." That is Sri Krsna – Reality the Beautiful. He is non-differentiated substance, but is full of *lila* – Divine Pastimes. *Deva* means beauty and pastimes combined. His domain is *bhargo* which is venerated by the *jiva*-soul. What is that? It is the *svarupa-sakti* – the *vaibhava*, the extension of Srimati Radharani. She holds the full service responsibility and energy to serve Sri Krsna. So *bhargo* is no less than the *vaibhava*, the extended body of Srimati Radharani containing everything for the service of Sri Krsna. This is the *Rasaraja-mahabhava* conception. *Bhargo* represents *Mahabhava*, the Predominated Moiety, and *Deva* - Krsna – represents *Rasaraja*, the Predominating Moiety.

Dhimahi in the *Gayatri Mantram* means, "*Bhargo Devasya Dhimahi*". We are invited, "You come and meditate." What sort of meditation is possible there in that Super-subjective area? That meditation is in the sense of culture – cultivation of service to the Higher by the practice of veneration and worship. This sort of experience is possible there. *Dhimahi* is not abstract meditation but means *Krsnanusilanam* – to participate in the spontaneous flow of the current of devotion in that Super-subjective area, Vrndavan.
Dhiyo yo' nah pracodayat – And what will be the result? The capacity of your cultivation will be increased.

dasa kare vetan, more deha prema-dhana

We serve and what remuneration will we get? We will receive a greater capacity with more willingness to serve. What is the remuneration of service? The serving principle, the serving spirit is increased and enhanced – just as interest is added to capital in the bank. I am getting the interest; I do not draw the money but the interest comes and is added to the capital – in this way.

dasa kare vetan, more deha prem-dhana

We shall try to cultivate with all our attention towards that plane. We shall try to serve, to dedicate ourselves, and the dedicating principle will be increased again and again. He will give us *prema* as remuneration. *Prema* means the special capacity to render loving service. This is the inner meaning of the *Gayatri Mantra*. The *Gayatri Mantra* is the song of salvation. This song that begins from Goloka descends as *sankirtana* in the middle stages to improve our service towards the highest goal. *Kirtana* means that which is sun. So, *sankirtan* begins with the *Brahma Gayatri* and then comes to the Gauranga stage. It began in *Krsna-kirtan*, touching this plane and then again, it reaches Vrndavan as the flute-song – *kirtana*, "The sweet sound of the flute of Krsna". The *sankirtana* of Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu reinstates us very quickly in our highest serving position as all are interconnected.

When we enter the area of Vrndavan, there – the sound of the *vamsi*, the flute, helps to excite and engage the servants in their own respective duties. When the flute is sounded, then the *Gopis* and other devotees become well adjusted in their respective duties. At night, hearing the sound of the flute of Krsna, the *Gopis* will run to the Yamuna thinking, "Oh, is He coming or is He going?" When mother Yasoda also hears the flute, she thinks: "My son is nearby and He is coming home very soon." In this way, the sound of the flute is engaging the different servants of respective positions to be mindful of their own duties, their service.

krsna kirtan gayatrir-radha padam dhimahi

Radha padam dhimahi: all these services are represented fully in Sri Radhika; and all others like branches are parts of Her. *Madhurya-rasa* is the *mukhya-rasa*, the chief *rasa*, the culmination of all *rasas*. In the conception of *Rasaraj-Mahabhava,* Srimati Radharani is *Mahabhava* who represents the whole serving attitude of Goloka, the abode of Sri Krsna.

The flute-song of Sri Krsna is reminding us and engaging us in our service. And what is that service? That service is to surrender ourselves to Srimati Radharani and to accept Her suggestions. The *Brahma Gayatri Mantra* will excite and entice us to be mindful about Srimati Radharani's sweet lotus feet – to obey Her orders. She represents the whole Super-subjective serving area. So, to try to engage in Her service, under Her order, to accept Her direction and to obey Her – that is service to Srimati Radharani. In this way, the meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri* has been drawn to *Radha-dasyam*, self-determination – *svarupena vyavasthitih*.

The Ultimate End of our Life

The partial representation in *vatsalya-rasa* and *sakhya-rasa* are also present there in some other way. They are part and parcel of the *mukhya-rasa*, the chief *rasa* and they all support this main *rasa*. In *vatsalya-rasa*, the devotees will serve Nanda-Yaosda. In *sakhya-rasa*, they will serve Sridam-Sudama, but ultimately the whole substance in one conception is included in Srimati Radharani. So, *Radha-dasyam* – service to Srimati Radharani has been drawn out from the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*. This is the ultimate end of our life. It cannot but be upward and progressive.

And She in Her fullest mercy advents with Krsna – a combined sum as the Golden Lord, Mahaprabhu illuminating *Gayatri* as *Radha-dasyam*. The *Vedas* and *Upanisads* reach their fullest theistic conclusions in the acme of all faith, by name, the *Srimad Bhagavatam*.

bhargo vai vrsabhanuja-atma-vibhavaikaradhana sri-puram

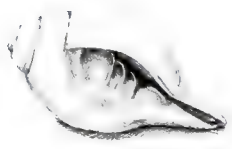
Bhanu means the sun, or who illuminates by light. Srimati Radharani is the daughter of King Vrsabhanu so the word *bhanu* has been selected. This represents Her personal extended self. *Vaibhava* means that which comes out as extended self. *Prabhava* is the central representation and *vaibhava* is the outer extension. The very gist of the *svarupa-sakti* is Srimati Radharani and the whole *svarupa-sakti*, the internal potency, is Her extended self.

What is Her characteristic? She is *aradhana* – who worships Herself. She is Sri, Laksmi, the gist of Beauty, the beauty and sweetness of service to Sri Krsna. The town, the abode of Her beautiful service is the whole *svarupa-sakti*. Just as rays of light extend from the sun, so the whole *svarupa-sakti* is an extension of the person *Mahabhava*, Sri Radhika. *Rasaraja* and *Mahabhava* – this *svarupa-sakti* is the extension of *Mahabhava. Bhargo* means the extended self of *Mahabhava. Mahabhava* means *aradhana* (a particular mood of worship that satisfies Sri Krsna), Sri, and Laksmi.

Radharani is also called Sri. Her *sobha* (Sri means *sobha*, beauty) is Her extension. Her beautifully extended self and that is the whole *bhargo*, the whole area. She is the gist, the essence, and this is the extended self. And what is Her nature? That is All-Serving. She has developed this whole area of "*bhargo*". She has developed Herself into such a beautiful area of Her *svarupa-sakti*, and thereby She serves Her Lord, Sri Krsna. They all come out from Her Beautiful, effulgent Self. The very gist, the very sweetness is She, Sri Radha in the *Rasaraj-Mahabhava* conception. This is the inner meaning of the *Brahma Gayatri Mantra*.

anyabhilasita sunyam, jnana-karmady-ananvrtam
(Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.1.11)

"The fleeting desires and the permanent, elevating nature of those who want to become 'knowers' and 'masters' of everything, is suicidal. To make progress on our knowing and understanding capacity is a waste of energy. So, try to drive out the ghost – the ego – in different forms as *karma, jnana* and *yoga*, etc." In other words, the lording-it-over tendency must be vanquished.



Chapter Eleven

That Wonderful Stride

In his *Krsna-karnamrta*, Bilvamangal Thakur states, "*bhaktis tvayi sthiratara bhagavan yadi syad*" – My Lord, if my dedication, my veneration to You is permanent – it is in a settled stage; *daivena nah phalati divya-kisora-murtih* – and if it reaches to such a height that we can find *divya-kisora-murtih* – if we can reach so far to find out the eternal pastimes of the Divine Couple; if we can reach to this extent – then we will find *muktih svayam mukulitanjali sevat 'sman* – Oh, the facility of liberation – emancipation – with folded palms will come to serve us in any way we like.

As well, *dharmartha-kama-gatayah sramaya-pratiksah; dharma*, the results of being dutiful – *artha*, the art of money-making – *kama*, the objects of sense perception – they are all ready and waiting outside for whenever a call comes from us to run to our front excitedly, "How can I serve you, my master, my Lord?"

That will be our position. *Dharma, artha, kama* will wait outside and whenever we will call them, they will present themselves, "What do you want me to do?" And *mukti*, liberation will always be moving around us with folded palms doing service of different types if, in our fortuitous position, we can rise up to such a height as to find that Divine Couple engaged in happy pastimes."

Bilvamangal Thakur showed in his life, a peculiar example. How, from the house of a prostitute, he went straight to Vrndavan and got the grace of the Supreme Entity. How, in his life he was so much engrossed – almost swallowed up wholly – as a sensualist of the lowest type and yet, from that position in a single life, he could raise himself to the highest stage of realization of Reality the Beautiful.

Mahaprabhu took two books from South India; one was *Brahma-Samhita* and the other, *Krsna-karnamrta. Krsna-karnamrta* is about the pastimes of Vrndavan and *Sri Brahma-Samhita* shows the ontological basis of the Absolute – how the Lord of Vrndavan is the highest conception of Reality.

Krsna-lila is not a matter of history; in history events occur. They happen once and cannot reoccur at any time. History is a phenomenon in which what went on in the past never comes again. There is an expression that. "History repeats itself," but that is in the similar nature of the event, not in the actual fact. History repeats its nature but what is gone – is gone. But in *Krsna-lila* in the eternal world, it is not so. It may present the same thing every time – at every second. So, it is called *nitya-lila*, eternal pastimes – crossing the limitation and jurisdiction of history. In history, what is past is dead. But in the pastimes of the Lord, they are always present, *nitya* – eternal.

He can show Himself in His eternal forms simultaneously. So, in His past, present and future, all events are simultaneously occurring. When He enters the arena of Kamsa, different groups are seeing Him in different ways. What is seen by one section of people is seen in a different way by another section, according to their own nature. Even the blind can see Him if He wills.

If He wills to show Himself to anyone – even the blind – they can see Him clearly, because the eyes of flesh are not necessary to see Him. By His willpower alone, He can reveal Himself to any person. That was the case with Dhrtarastra in the *Kuru-sabha*. Dhrtarastra said, "For the time being, my Lord, restore my eyesight so that I can see Your wonderful form which others are seeing and praising. You can do anything, so for the time being, remove my blindness."

"It is not necessary to remove your blindness, Dhrtarastra! I say, 'You see Me,' and you will see Me" And by His order Dhrtarastra saw! His order, His wish is everything. His simple will is everything – the cause of all existence. The Kurus wanted to see Draupadi naked, but Draupadi's appeal reached Him and He sanctioned unlimited cloth – that cloth became infinite – of infinite character. As much clothing as they removed, so much cloth yet remained. It is the will, the *vicara*, which is everything. Such great potency of such high quality is in the Prime Cause. We are accustomed to think, "This is good; this is bad" and "This is possible, this is impossible." But these rules do not apply in this case – in His case. All of our experience will fail to occupy even a negligible, miniscule part of His Kingdom.

All of His steps are Wonderful

He is wonderful. In the example of Vamanavatar it is told of His "Wonderful Stride" – *adbutkrama*. With one stride, he covered the whole earth and with the next, He captured the whole of heaven. He then needed a place to put His third step, but where? He is *adbutkrama*. He, of wonderful stride – all His steps are wonderful. He is wonder personified – the source of all wonder to our tiny brain.
He is here, He is also everywhere. With His full representation He is everywhere and yet He is nowhere! Everything is in Him and nothing is in Him!
Krsna says to Arjuna, "Try to understand My peculiar position." He is the mystery of all mysteries. Even our own soul is astonishing to our worldly experience.

ascharyavat pasyati kascid enam,ascharyavad vadati tathaiva canyah
ascharyavac caiman anyah srnoti, srutvapy enam veda na caiva kascit
Bhagavad-gita 2.29

"We do not even know the extraordinary nature of our own self. It is of a very high order." But our attention is focused toward so many mortal things. We have been introduced to, and captured by, the meanest aspects of this world. This is the consequence of the mood of enjoyment.

We want to enjoy, we want to exploit – a good exploiter is a king to us. But exploitation in itself is degrading, very mean and low. It takes us to the lowest position and makes us victims of a great reaction. Exploitation and enjoyment – we are in the midst of them and we do not know anything, cannot think of anything but enjoyment. We want to understand anything and everything in terms of enjoyment. We are in such a filthy degraded position: only "enjoyment, enjoyment" – that is exploitation. But to exploit is the meanest type of nature. It is hateful and we must get out of the clutches of that ghost of exploitation.

There is another ghost – renunciation, idleness. But the noble thing is dedication –a dedicated life. There are two ghosts – one of renunciation; and the other of exploitation. We have to get out of that nightmare, that mania which is based on our tendency to measure things to be good or bad. In exploitation there is division into regular and irregular, or *dharma* and *adharma*.

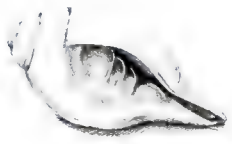
And then there is renunciation. So many great stalwarts of that conception recommend a complete cessation of the dynamic life. A dead stop: but that should not be the prospect of any conscious man. A dead stop to life – is that any goal of life for the saner section?

A life of nobility, a life of dedication – not ordinary dedication for the environment, but to the Highest Good, the highest form of life.
In the lower stage dedication is calculated; in the higher stage spontaneous, automatic, dynamically uncalculating instantaneous flow! Real joy is there. Joy resides there in quality and quantity; in every way, real life is there. Life is there and here it is casting the worst shadow, a perverted reflection.

Yet we are told, *uddhared atmanatmanam*, the key is in our own hand. The freedom by which we can associate with anything good or bad and reap the accorded result is in our hand. How is it so? We are parched for freedom and yet the key is in our hand?

Ultimately, we are told that the key is in our own hand. No one else is to be blamed for our present condition. But there is always the possibility of noble help being extended to us, and we must accept that. Our past actions also influence us a great deal – whether they were good, bad or of the eternal aspiration – *sukrti*. But ultimately, the possibility of free action is not taken away from us at any stage – even if we are reduced to the level of taking birth as a tree! There also, the freedom is within. It is hard to think that a tree has got independence – free will – but it is there, in a suppressed state.

Freedom is within us also. We may try as far as possible to understand how it is so. Because our freedom is covered by so many conditions, we may think that we are not free – that we are forced by circumstances – it may seem so. Still, we are free for our selection of any path – good or bad. Our existence is very small and so, our freedom is also small and meagre. But it is there. Though almost negligible, still, it is – it exists.



Chapter Twelve

Fulfilment Begins in Remembering

Generally, if all our activity is stopped by unfavourable weather, we think, "This is very bad." We are men of action, men who exploit the environment and nature for gathering some energy. We are always trying to collect some energy for our use. That is our nature. The very nature of those who live in this mortal world is to collect more and more energy and wealth that can be utilized in a time of need. If there is any hindrance to that end, we think it is a very bad circumstance, in opposition to the object of our life. But to remind us about the importance of our inner wealth, we are advised that the outer nature cannot do us so much harm as can our internal nature – that is, our apathy to collect more wealth for the inner existence, the inner self. Be mindful of that.

Losing things of this mortal world is not bad, it is all coming and going. The body itself, the centre of all this activity, will also vanish. Then what is the necessity of collecting so much energy for the bodily connection? So, awaken your consciousness. Find the real person within – the soul. Search him out and try to help him. That is possible only with help from the *sadhu*. The day in which we do not find any saint or have any discussion about the real purpose of life – the inner life, the inner substance – that day we are the loser. Be conscious of that. In all respects, in any way possible, mind your own lesson – mind your own interest.

Find your own self-interest. Be unmindful towards the external world and circumstance. Dive deep into reality, the inner world. Find your inner self, the inner world where you really live, where your inner self is living. Try to find your Home, go back to God, back to Home. Your energy must be utilized for going Home, not for wandering in this land of death. Try to avoid the land of death at any cost. Always try to find the eternal soil, that soil to which you belong. Try to understand what is your home, why it is your home. Home comfort – what does it mean? It means our birthplace, the place where you are born.

In *Srimad Bhagavatam* we find this verse:

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido
bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah
taj-josanad asv apavarga-vartmani
sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati
Srimad Bhagavatam 3.25.25

"In the association of pure devotees, discussions about Me are very pleasing and satisfying to the ear and the heart. Such talks, which are full of spiritual potency, are a source of sweetness, and by such cultivation, the path of liberation from worldly life quickly opens. Then gradually one attains firm faith which, in due course, develops into taste and then real love for Me."

This was spoken by the incarnation of the Lord, Sri Kapiladeva, to His mother, Devahuti, in response to her inquiry as to what is the real goal of life and how to attain it. It came about in this way. Devahuti was married to the sage, Kardama Rsi. After passing some years in the enjoyment of married life, Devahuti conceived a child in her womb from the Rsi. In

Bhagavad-gita the Lord says: *prajanas casmi kandarpah*, "Of Cupids, I am He who ensure progeny." And elsewhere, it is said, *prayanaya na rataye*, married life is not meant for enjoyment, but for the purpose of producing good progeny.

When the objective of their marriage was achieved, the Rsi proposed that he retire from married life. He told Devahuti, "You have a child in your womb and it is not an ordinary child – the Lord Himself is coming So, I am going to live alone for my own higher purpose of life."

Then, Devahuti said, "I have such a good partner. I am fortunate to have a saint like you as my husband, but I did not take proper advantage of your noble personality to learn anything about *Brahman*, about the Lord, about my inner life's necessity and its fulfilment. I did not inquire about that. I was only busy to serve you, to satisfy your desires. Though I had such a noble companion, I did not utilize my fortune. Now I pray that you may stay for some time and teach me, help me in spiritual life and then you may go."

Kardama Rsi replied. "You will get help from your son. It is the Lord Himself who is coming – not an ordinary child. Remember this, and in time you will receive that spiritual help from Him. So I won't stay; I shall go now." He departed. Soon, the child appeared and Devahuti raised that child alone. Because of her great motherly affection as her son grew, she gradually forgot what her husband had revealed – that He was not an ordinary child.

In course of time, when the boy had grown and was one day absorbed. Devahuti was reminded, "Oh, the mood of my child does not seem to be ordinary." She could understand that He was engaged in deep thought and considered, "His father foretold that the Lord would appear through me and now I see it is true. My son's mood does not seem to be worldly but it is from above. His mind is absorbed in transcendental thought."

She then slowly approached Him. "Child, your father told me that You are not an ordinary boy of this world. You are Divine. I wanted some spiritual advice from him but he told me that You would advise me. For so long I did not heed that but today, Your mood is encouraging me – it is reminding me of those words of Your father and encouraging me to approach You for spiritual advice. Be pleased to advise me about what is spiritual truth. Who am I? What is this world? How can I find the proper direction of life? Who is the owner of this world and what is my duty towards Him? You are not an ordinary boy, so I want to know all these things from You, my child." Then from the lips of her son came this verse, given in the *Srimad Bhagavatam*:

satam prasangan mama virya-samvido
bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah
taj-josanad asy apavarga-vartmani
sraddha ratir bhaktir anukramisyati
Srimad Bhagavatam 3.25.25

Lord Kapila said, *satam prasangan mama virya-samvido* – "Talks about Me which are full of potency can only be found coming from the lips of My devotees. Not only lip-deep words, but words that have depth, spirit, power and that represent reality come from the lips of My real devotee. Such words are not shallow, but are surcharged with spirit, with life, and can enliven.

Bhavanti hrt-karna-rasayanah kathah – they satisfy both our ear and our heart and give a taste of spiritual joy – *rasayanah*. Their words are surcharged with the ecstasy of the spiritual world and colour our ear, our mind and our heart – physically, mentally and also on the plane of our soul. *Taj-josanad* – by hearing from the real source, from that real *sadhu*; *asv apavarga-vartmani* – we are led towards relief from this worldly life. By a gradual process, we attain these things: *sraddha ratir bhatir anukramisyati*: first *sraddha* – ever increasing faith; then *rati*, a slight taste; then we get real love – *bhakti. Anukramisyati* – by a gradual process we are taken towards the higher domain."

In this way, the boy began to advise His mother, Devahuti. This Devahuti-nandana Kapila, was the son of Kardama Rsi, but there was another Kapila whose *sankhya* philosophy does not recognize God: it only analyzes the material elements, gradually eliminating everything of spiritual substance.
So, there are two Kapilas, both of whom gave *sankhya* philosophy: the Divine Son of Kardama Rsi and the other, Sankhya Kapila. Kapila, the son of Kardama and Devahuti gave what is known as *sankhya,* but He has given recognition to the Supreme Lord, *isvara.* However, the atheist Kapila claimed *isvara-asiddhe* – there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this world. That is his conclusion.

The *nyayikas* (logicians) say that there must be One who has created this world. This world has been created so there must be someone who has done it. Their highest conclusion is that there must be a creator, and He is God, *Isvara*. But the atheist Kapila says, "No, there is no necessity of any God to explain the existence of this material world – *isvara-asiddhe.* His finding, his conclusion is that there is no necessity of a creator; automatically everything exists. Only two things are necessary: first, a particle of spirit, and second, matter. Matter and spirit combined, Siva and Sakti, have created this world. There are so many spiritual particles, like specks of sand or dust, and by their combination with matter this world is going on automatically.

Once, while at the Madras Math, I met a gentleman from Madhupur who was a follower of this school of thought. He was an educated Bengali gentleman and I asked him, "What have you got from your *guru* – that Kapila?"
He said, "So many souls are there, *yata, jiva* and everyone is a *siva*, independent of this matter."
I said, "You are satisfied with this explanation?"
"Yes, I am satisfied: *pasa baddho bhavej jivah pasa muktah sadasivah* – the soul while conditioned is *jiva*, and when liberated, then he is *siva*."
I told him, "Where your philosophy ends, our philosophy – that of the *Bhagavat* School, begins."
"How is it so?" he asked me.
"You will have to explain where these *sivas* exist. There are so many *sivas*, like particles of spiritual dust. But should we not think they must be living in some position and that there must exist some relationship between them? There are so many and some sort of relationship must be there between them and they must also stay somewhere – in some position, some plane. And how are they harmonized together, or are they each an independent unit, all fighting one another? If not, then what is their nature?"

"The *Bhagavat* has come to explain about the *mukta-jivas*, the liberated souls. These souls, who were once diseased, are now free from that disease. In their healthy condition, what do they do? What is their position, their characteristic, their nature, their objective and their pastimes? We have to know that. So, *Bhagavatam* has given us an explanation."

Devarsi Narada asked Vyasadeva, "Explain what is the normal, natural condition of the liberated souls who are not diseased." And that has been given. There is a Centre and all function in connection with Him and are all harmonized together.
In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita*, the Lord says:

yat sankhyaih prapyate sthanam, tad yogair api gamyate
ekam sankhyam ca yoganca, yah pasyati sa pasyati
Bhagavad-gita 5.5

"He has true vision who can see that the *sankhya* and *yoga* systems are one and the same." One person is trying to reach the ultimate goal by external elimination and the other by internal elimination. "This is body, this is mind, this is soul, then supersoul, and onwards." The search is all within. The process of elimination is within. And by that he is trying to reach the core. And the other, by elimination of the elements of the external world (earth, fire, water, ether, air), he is trying to understand the origin.

That is *sankhya – neti, neti, neti* – "This is not it, this is not it, this is dependent, this is also dependent, this is not original, nor this, nor this. All are effects. Then what is the cause?" To inquire through the external process is *sankhya*, and the internal process is through *yoga – yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dhyana, dharana, samadhi*. So, by elimination of the effect, we come in contact with the cause, from the gross we start towards the subtle and we reach more and more subtle planes in the causal direction.

This is the process in both *sankhya* and *yoga*. But in the beginning of *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Sukadeva Goswami, who is speaking to Pariksit Maharaj, begins his talk by saying that these two – *sankhya* and *yoga* –and also *sva-dharma parinisthaya* (fulfilling one's *Vedic* duty), can all give us liberation, but there is something more:

etavan sankhya-yogabhyam, sva-dharma-parinisthaya
janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana-smrtih
Srimad Bhagavatam 2.1.6

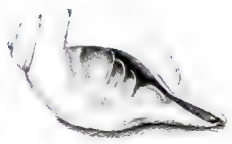
He says, *etavan,* so far, by these processes, we are told our liberation may be achieved: by *sankhya*, eternal elimination: by *yoga*, internal elimination and also by *sva-dharma parinisthaya*, discharging one's duty as it is recommended in the *Veda*. To perform whatever is one's respective duty as it is recommended without any special aim or objective, is *niskama* (action free from personal desire). Because it has been advised by the *sastra* as my duty in my present position, I am doing it, but in a disinterested way, without any special end.
As a *brahmana*, I am told, "You must do these things," so I am doing them. As a *ksatriya*, my duty is to keep the peace and control the evildoers: that is my duty and I am doing it. As a *vaisya*, I am advised to do such and such. Because it is advised in the *sastra*. I am doing my

respective duty in a disinterested way, that is, without any special aim or interest. All these three processes – *sankhya, yoga* and *Vedic* duty – lead us to liberation.

But *janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana smrtih* – after we get relief from the external bondage then the fulfilment of our life is in remembering our Lord Narayana, the Creator, and our relationship with Him. We must get out of the net we are entangled in. After getting release from this entanglement, we must search out our proper relationship with the Prime Cause. Who are we in our relationship with Him? Here the *Bhagavata* begins:

etavan sankhya-yogabhyam, sva-dharma-parinisthaya
janma labhah parah pumsam, ante narayana-smrtih
Srimad Bhagavatam 2.1.6

Janma labhah means fulfilment of our existence, our birth: *labhah* means the gain, the fulfilment, the end. What is that end? *Ante narayana-smrtih* – our connection or re-connection with the Centre – that All-Harmonizing Centre. That should be our goal. The *Bhagavatam* comes to tell us this. So many other *sastras* come to give us release from this external bondage; but with internal progress, after crossing the marginal plane, we get admission into the *paravyoma*, the special area – *Vaikuntha*. That is, we get visa for that land – *viraja, brahmaloka, bedhi, paravyoma, paya*. We catch the flow of the current going towards the Centre – that is the visa. *Sankhya yoga* and *sva-dharma parinisthaya* can give us the passport to get out of the land where we are living. But after that, if we want to attain something, a visa is necessary.



Chapter Thirteen

Self-Forgetfulness: The Peels Of Devotion

Even the Elements Struggle in this World

According to Indian medical authorities, in the body is air, bile and mucus, which correspond to air, fire and water – the three elements in the ether that influence the earth. Earth is mainly influenced by water, and water by heat, heat by air and all are fighting and struggling within ether. This is the nature of the material world. Then there is the mental world, the manifestation of mental energy, "I want this; I do not want that. I like this; I do not like that." The intelligence gives direction to the mind: "Don't take this – take that." But it is all within the *ahankara*, the material ego. Above that is the soul, who experiences everything, good or bad. He is called *purusa*:

purusah sukha-duhkhanam, bhoktrtve hetur ucyate
Bhagavad-gita 13.21

"It is established that it is the conditioned living being, *purusa* himself, who is the responsible cause of the feelings of joy and sorrow which he experiences in this world."

This is the difference between spirit and matter. Matter, called *prakrti*, is energy; but the soul, *purusa*, experiences good and bad – he is the person who feels good or bad, sorrow or happiness. He is of one substance and that which is felt, is another.

karya-karana-kartrtve, hetuh prakrtir ucyate
Bhagavad-gita 13.21

"Certainly in this impermanent world all movement occurs through the inherent quality of the predominated material nature, *prakrti*, which is responsible for both cause (the force of the senses) and effect (the material body). So, all activity we find here – all movement – is due to that material energy and the feeler of everything. The knower, the conceiver, is the soul. The soul is like the eye – an eye that can see anything and everything.

In *sankhya* philosophy, the *prakrti-purusa* relationship has been compared to that of a blind man and a crippled man. A crippled man may ride on the shoulders of a blind man. He who is moving (*prakrti*) is blind and he who is crippled who is on his shoulders (*purusa*), has got eyes to see and can guide. The soul is 'crippled', he cannot move, but he can see. The blind man is the commander of the energy, who can move here and there; he can carry, but he is blind. In this way the soul is the knower, the feeler, the subjective existence, and the energetic aspect is that of the force, *prakrti*. So, there is force and consciousness.

We are so much engrossed with force – we so much require the force, the energy – that we have forgotten that we are the feeler of that force! That 'feeler' is astonishing! If we try to understand our own self, we will be dumbfounded, "Oh – what is this? I am of such a nature? I have nothing to do with this world of immortality. I can live independently of this mortal world? Is it so?"

Further, we will be able to understand that there is supersoul, the oversoul. In the material world there are so many different planes: the world of heat, the world of water, the world of air, etc. Everything is evolving – from the subtle plane down to a gross plane such as stone or wood. Just as there is development in this direction in the material world, so in the subjective world, there is also development, but upwards – from the soul to the supersoul, then to super-supersoul (*bhagavan*); in this way there is development and it is infinite.

Yet, we are *tatastha* – marginal; the soul is in a marginal position between higher and lower energies, between the subtle side and the gross side. The upper side is eternal, conscious and happy; it is *sat-cit-ananda*, that is eternal, conscious and happy. Here, it is *asat, acit, nirananda*. It is *asat*, flickering and temporary – every minute it is dying; it is *acit*, unconscious, and *nirananda*, with no feeling of joy or happiness. These are the respective natures of this world and of that world.

If we want to have association with that world, we are informed that in the highest position, there is infinite beauty, love and ecstasy. That world can come down to us and we can be taken in as one of the Lord's own family members. We can live as a family member with the highest Entity of that world? Mahaprabhu assured us it is possible. But possible only through affection; not by knowledge, not by mystic realization or any other power – No! By affection and love we can attract Him in such a way that we can be given recognition as a family member, a position very near to Him – to such an extent it is plausible!

tato mam tattvato jnatva, visate tad-anantaram
Bhagavad-gita 18.55

"After realizing My proper position, they enter there: that is, into My own special jurisdiction, into My family." And *Bhagavatam* says.

mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.34

"They obtain such high recognition and this further qualifies them to live with Me eternally as My own. If they selflessly come forward to satisfy Me, leaving aside everything, this is *ananya-bhajana*. If they want Me alone and nothing else, then this is their future prospect."

martyo yada tyakta-samasta-karma
niveditatma vicikirsito me
tadamrtatvam pratipadyamano
mayatma-bhuyaya ca kalpate vai
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.29.34

Sanatana Goswami has analyzed what is the proper meaning of this expression *atma-bhuyaya*: "My own" – they become "My own". What is the meaning of 'own'? He says it means to enter into His family. 'Family' in this context means a gradation from servant, to friends and their associates, to the filial affection group (the guardian group) and finally, the highest conceptual group – that of consorthood. There is one story I heard from my god-brother,

Vaikanas Maharaj, who was a *brahmachari* scholar of Orissa. It was about an incident that occurred in recent history in connection with the Jagannath Temple at Puri where it was customary that no *khichari* used to be offered to the Lord.

Once, there was a raid by the Mohammedans on Orissa. One of the girls of the royal family was abducted and was used to serve the pleasures of the general by his loyal soldiers. He later left the state but that girl remained on the outskirts of some village or town and there, she gave birth to a child who was a great devotee. It was a very peculiar thing: the girl was also a devotee but somehow she had to undergo such a horrible experience. She gave birth to a child and he lived on the outskirts of that town. When he grew up he used to cook *khichari* – rice and beans cooked together, boiled into a half-liquid consistency and he used to offer that to Jagannath from afar. By dint of his devotion, Jagannath would go there to accept that *khichari* offering in the late afternoon.

One day, the boy was perhaps late in his offering; Jagannath took the *khichari* but the time was then late for the temple offering. He had to run back to install Himself in His position in the temple and a particle of that *khichari* was still on His lips. The *pandas*, the *pujaris* noticed; "What is this? How has this happened? We can detect this is not the proper offering to Jagannath. Then, how is it here on His lips?" So, it was referred to the leader of the *pandas* and he also searched but he could not ascertain the cause. Then it was taken before the king, who also investigated, "Who has taken this food and smeared it on the mouth of Jagannath?"

Finally the priest who had been in charge at the time of the offering of food in the temple was apprehended: "You are responsible! You were in charge of the temple at the time of Jagannath's offering. How has this impure thing come in His mouth? You must explain or you will be punished."
The man was innocent and he said, "I do not know anything. I do not know a thing."

When he was about to be punished, Jagannath came in a dream to the king as well as to the leading priest: "That man is innocent. Do not disturb him. On the outskirts of the town is My devotee. He offered that food to Me and I took it, but the time was late and I had to hurry back to occupy My position at the temple so My mouth was not cleansed. This is the name of that boy. He is living there. He is My devotee and I have taken his food there."

It was as a result of the Mohammedan general's exploitation of the princess that this devotee appeared. So, *Krsna-bhakti* – devotion to Krsna – does not care for the formality of purity or impurity by any worldly considerations. It is independent.

Krsna-bhakti is so powerful and does not care for anything. Jagannath accepted the offering of that boy who was considered to have the worst fate, a cursed fate. That princess was abducted by the Mohammedans and thereafter, her issue came in the form of that boy – so he was considered to be the curse of the cursed. But still, his offering attracted Jagannath so much.

The Inner Existence of us All

So, love is wonderfully situated above everything – surpassing all. Mahaprabhu asked us to accept the path of love, which means giving one's heart, one's self. It is so powerful – nothing else can attract Krsna. He is very greedy to eat this love, this *prema*. He lives on *prema*. He is the Lord of love. That love has its inner existence; it is the inner existence of all of us. He is Love personified and there is a tinge of that also within us. And, like 'birds of a feather', love likes love.

Once Mahaprabhu – at the time when He had conquered and captured the Kazi – was leading the *sankirtana* party and was feeling very tired. He came to Sridhar Pandit, the poor *brahmana* who used to sell plantains in the market to somehow meagrely earn his livelihood. Sridhar Pandit had a well and nearby, an iron pot that he used for drawing water. Mahaprabhu began to drink water from the well with the pot that had been left outside. All the devotees objected. "What are You doing? This pot is always kept outside and is very dirty. We are bringing a clean pot for your drinking water." Mahaprabhu ignored them and continued drinking water from that iron pot. He commented. "This is the pot of My devotee Sridhar; it is purer than anything."

In *Bhagavad-gita* (9.30) the Lord says:

api cet sudaracaro, bhajate mam ananya-bhak
sadhur eva sa mantavyah, samyag vyavasito hi sah

"If a person is an unalloyed devotee who worships Me exclusively, having abandoned all other pursuits based on exploitation and renunciation, even if he commits some abominable action, he is to be considered saintly. He is cent-per-cent pure because his endeavours are completely on My behalf and his determination is fixed in that resolve."

This is because one who has really surrendered to Krsna is accepted as "His own". Such a surrendered soul should never be considered as impure – a transgressor. So, what is *bhajana*? It is a transaction of the heart, not of any formality. In Krsna devotion. *Krsna-bhakti*, the only consideration is the dedication of the heart. Krsna wants that, and not any external formality of the civilized or non-civilized world. In the case of Lord Ramachandra also we see that, although in the highest consideration. He is the director of moral laws – *niti* – still, he could not contain Himself when offered something with devotion by an 'untouchable' lady. And that was after she had first taken it herself! After she had taken some of the sweet herself, at once she saved the remainder – what she considered most tasteful – she kept it for Lord Rama and He accepted that.

There is another incident that happened in Vidura's house. While Vidura was out collecting alms, Krsna suddenly appeared as a guest at his house. Vidura's wife received Him but there was nothing to offer – only some bananas. After seating Him nicely, she gave Him those bananas, but inadvertently she was offering the banana peels to Krsna and discarding the fruit on the ground. She was so bewildered – overwhelmed by the joy of finding Krsna suddenly present in her house – that she was discarding the fruit and giving Him the peels and He was eating them!

At that very moment, Narada and Vidura arrived and Vidura exclaimed, "What are you doing? You are leaving the fruit and giving the peels to my Lord."
But Narada came to her relief: "She is bewildered but He who is eating is not at all disturbed! One might think He would say, 'Oh, give Me the fruit. Why are you giving Me the peels?' But He is eating the peels without any concern."
Then Krsna explained, "I am eating neither the fruit nor the peels, but I am eating that which is devotion. Neither the peel nor the fruit can satisfy Me; I need neither the one nor the other. But I live on devotion, Narada."

patram puspam phalam toyam, yo me bhaktya prayacchati
tad aham bhakty-upahrtam, asnami prayatatmanah
Bhagavad-gita 9.26

The Lord says, "I accept all those foodstuffs that are offered; but actually, it is not the food itself that I take. It is the purpose behind that offering – the ideal. This is the very spirit of the thing I am concerned with and never the outward show. I am living in the inner world: so with food, it is the inner substance with which I am concerned – not the external appearance."

Therefore, it is said, *bhavagrahi-janardanah*, "Lord Janardana sees the mood of devotion." Devotion does not care for the ordinary rules and regulations of this material world. Still, in our lower condition, we are advised to go on with *arcana*, and depending on our stage of realization, what we think to be pure, we offer. And what is impure, we reject. In the preliminary stage, this is necessary for our fortune (our cleansing), but as we advance, these external considerations are eliminated and the internal ones are given more and more importance.

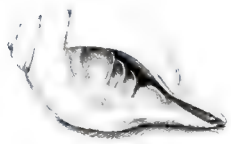
Formality ignored for the sake of Precedence

There is another story that illustrates this. Vrajen Sil was a big scholar of Bengal – a scholar of philosophy so extraordinary that once, after he had delivered a lecture at the World Conference of Philosophy in Rome, the president of the meeting told him, "I took you to be Aristotle!" He was as respected as Aristotle, he was such a learned man. He had been a student of Scottish Church College in Calcutta and once was taking an examination there. While in the examination hall, he was given the questions and paper. He began to write his answers. Many questions were there but he became so engrossed in answering the first one that he forgot about the others. So deeply engaged he was in answering this single question that he spent the whole allotted time on it and ignored all the others. When the bell rang and the examination time had expired, he was perplexed as to what to do. He had only dealt with the one question but he left his paper anyway and went away.

He was the brightest student in the student body but he was thinking that his name could not possibly be on the list of successful candidates because he had only answered one question out of possibly five or six. Still, he was stealthily coming to see if the list of successful candidates had been posted. Then one day he found that his name had appeared at the head of that list. He was perplexed. "How is this? I only dealt with one question and I am at the head of the list? How is it possible?"

So, he approached the professor. “Sir, I had answered only one question; how is it possible that you have given me first place?”
“Oh, Mr. Sil, your answer is on the level of a research scholar, not an ordinary student. So, I gave you first place.”

This is like *raga-marga,* where the formal things are all ignored and the substance is drawn out. Although normally Mr. Sil should have been placed among the lowest candidates who failed, the professor was a judge of some boldness and thought, “Oh, his answer to just one question is of such high quality, this student can never be considered to be a failure.” Rather, he was given the highest position. So, love is such. It does not care for formality in its real judgement.



Chapter Fourteen

Approach the Absolute – Walking on our Heads

It is better to be a fallen devotee than a *sahajiya*. Which is better – a poor man or a thief? One had money and lost it; the other is imitating that he is wealthy by committing wrong. One who is disconnected may be reconnected again soon, but a *sahajiya* means either that he had real connection with the truth and then became disconnected, i.e. chose the wrong path – or, that he is already engaged in the wrong path. So, which is the better position? Not to get the real thing or to get the wrong thing? Which is superior?

In *Srimad Bhagavad-gita* it is mentioned that in *tama-guna*, the lowest position, one thinks 'A' to be 'B'. In *raja-guna*, there is doubt whether this is real, or that is real. He cannot ascertain what is true. But to think that 'A' is 'B', and that 'B' is 'A' – that is the worst kind of error. They are misguided; *sahajiya* means misguided. They are accepting matter as consciousness so their position is more detrimental than that of those who have nothing or who have lost their connection with the real thing. In a similar way, the conclusion of the *mayavadi* section – who think that 'merging' into the formless *Brahman* is the highest end – is more dangerous because "a half-truth is worse than a lie."

se duwera madhye vinayi tabu bhalo
mayavadi-sanga nahi magi kono kalo
Saranagati 27.3

"Association with those who are out-and-out sense enjoyers can never be so detrimental to one's spiritual welfare as is the company of an impersonalist."

If one admits, 'I have no money,' and another, who really has no money, shows some counterfeit currency and claims, 'this is money' – his condition is worse because he is engaged in falsehood.

So to become a *sahajiya* is worse. He is deceived; his attention is captured by – engrossed in – the wrong conception. Such a person had some conception for a time and became disconnected; but he may again easily re-establish his connection. The other has become captivated by a wrong conception
so to convince him of the truth is more difficult because his mind is possessed and captured by the prejudice. The first person has no engagement; the engagement he had is gone. But the second person has mistaken one thing for another. He has taken matter to be divine and that is worse.

Once in my childhood, I heard this example from my teacher in school. He said that in America there was a good school of music with a peculiar admissions policy. If anyone had some previous knowledge of music, to attend the school, he was advised to pay double the standard tuition. But those who had no musical knowledge paid only the standard tuition. Why? Because those who had no previous knowledge do not know anything and therefore, can be taught easily. But others who had some previous knowledge had to pay double because everything that they had previously learned had to be forgotten and only then would they be

allowed to start learning in the proper way. They had to be taught first to forget their previous prejudices – their misconceptions of musical science – so for them, double charge!

So, it is something similar to that. In one case, no *bhakti*, no devotion; and in the other, in the name of devotion, some non-devotional conception has captured that man. That is imitation and worse – it is an offence. Srila Prabhupada said it is *vacanam*, to ridicule the devotees, Mahaprabhu, Rupa, Sanatana. It is to ridicule them because it confuses what is *prema* and what is *kama*. These activities are at opposite ends; and to accept *kama* in the name of *prema* is not only heinous and injurious to oneself, but it contaminates the whole atmosphere. So Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur says

kame preme dekho bhai, laksanete bhedo nai
tabu kama 'prema' nahi hay
tumi ta' barile kama, mithya tahe 'prema' – nama
aropile kise subha hay
keno mana, kamere nacao prema praya
carma-mamsamaya-kama, jada-sukha avirama
jada-visayete sada dhay
Kalyana Kalpa-taru 18, 19

"Just give your attention to this, my brother: lust and love – their symptoms may appear similar – still, lust is not love. But you have accepted lust in the place of love, and if you give the certificate that 'this is *prema*', you only cheat yourself by making such a mistake. By mistaking one thing for another, you will never get anything auspicious. Lust is concerned with flesh and blood; but love is in the highest position of spiritual existence."

Real Devotion is not so easy

So, they are opposites – like the North and South Poles. One is concerned with the body; the other is concerned with the Supersoul. A great Gulf lies between them. There is the ocean of dedication wherein the highest pinnacle of that dedication is *gopi-prema*. It exists where Krsna is. Yet what we see here is only imitation. Why the stern caution?

koti-mukta-madhye 'durlabha' eka krsna-bhakta
Chaitanya charitamrta Madhya 19.148

"Out of many millions of liberated persons, a pure devotee of Krsna is very difficult to find." We must consider all these things. Such dedication is possible only in the highest position of spiritual existence – the conscious area which is all-spiritual and not in any way concerned with flesh and blood. It is not concerned with the body.
The most heinous thing is that one will play the part of Krsna and a lady will play the part of a *gopi* and they will unite and in that way they will enjoy. To think this to be that – it is impossible! Any ordinary man will hate this. What to speak of the higher devotees, even an ordinary moral man is disturbed by such news.
Rupa Goswami has given us the development:

adau sraddha tatah sadhu-sango 'tha bhajana-kriya
tato 'nartha-nivrttih syat tato nistha rucis tatah
Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.4.15

"In spiritual development the beginning is faith (*sraddha*), then association with the devotees (*sadhu-sanga*), then engagement in service (*bhajana-kriya*), purging of faults (*anartha-nivrttih*), attainment of steadiness in devotion (*nistha*), spiritual taste (*ruci*), firm attachment (*asakti*), transcendental emotion (*bhava*) and pure love of Krsna (*prema*). These are the steps."

And from another standpoint:

vaikunthera prthivy adi sakala cinmaya
Chaitanya charitamrta Adi 5.53

"The earth, water, fire, air and ether of Vaikuntha are all spiritual."

We must always remember, "I am the offspring of *tatastha-sakti* – the marginal potency. That is where I was born and I must go through that to *svarupa-sakti*, which is highly elevated – much higher than myself. There, the soil is of higher stuff than that of which I myself am made. The earth, the air, the water, the trees, birds, etc. – everything there is superior to me. And I am to enter there? It is not a small thing, not an easy thing. It is not within the power of the person who wants to go there to enter; rather it is completely dependent on the grace of his superiors – *guru-krpa, vaisnava-krpa.*

We have to walk there on our head, not on our feet. All are *guru*; the soil is *guru*; the entire paraphernalia is *guru* – superior. I am made of a lower stuff and that plane is of higher substance so it is impossible to enter there at my own whim. To approach that direction as far as *mukti*, liberation, may be easy. Thereafter, we can only be drawn by their grace. It is not a matter of right that anyone can enter that realm. It is only the wholesale, cent-per-cent grace of a child of that soil which can take us there. Just as in court there is a guarantor – someone who stands as a guarantee for the subject, so some agent of that soil will take the risk and bring me there. So without their grace, *vaisnava-krpa, guru-krpa, bhagavata-krpa*, we cannot enter there.

No right – all grace. That grace can take me there. From our side, we have no right. I am a child of the marginal potency but there the whole substance – everything – is made of higher stuff than my own existence. I have my existence as a person and they are also all persons, but they are of an existence superior to me. How then can this person stand on the head of those? Only for their service can he enter at their feet! In any other way it is inconceivable and impossible. This principle is mentally difficult to accept, what to speak of actually entering there. This verse gives us an indication of the difficulty involved:

bahunam janmanam ante, jnanavan mam prapadyate
vasudevah sarvam iti, sa mahatma sudurlabhah
Bhagavad-gita 7.19

"After many births one who is actually in knowledge surrenders unto Me, Vasudeva, realizing that it is I who am both the source and substance of all that be. Such a great soul is extremely rare."

As well,

muktanam api siddhanam, narayana parayanah
sudurlabhah prasantatma, kotisv api maha-mune
Srimad Bhagavatam 6.14.5

"Oh great sage, out of millions of souls who are liberated and free from ignorance, and out of the many millions of *siddhas* who have nearly attained perfection, there is hardly one pure devotee of Narayana. Only such a devotee is completely satisfied and peaceful."

It is easy to think of – extremely hard to attain. No right can be established there; it is not a matter of right that we can go there so the 'right-seeker' will be totally frustrated. We must prepare for "all risk – no gain." But if somehow we can reach there, it will be "all gain – no risk."

So, to become a *Vaisnava* proper is almost impossible. It is only a matter of grace from that level that we can go there: there is nothing we can do from our side. Only with complete surrender, complete self-forgetfulness, complete dedication to the interest of that place can we hope to be taken there:

vaikunthera prthivy-adi sakala cinmaya
mayika bhutera tathi janma nahi haya
Chaitanya charitamrta Adi 5.53

"The earth, water, fire, air and ether of *Vaikuntha* are all spiritual. Material elements are not found there."
Uddhava is a devotee of such high quality that he prays, "If I can be a creeper there, I shall consider my fortune to have reached its highest extent" In Vrndavana, the creeper has an exalted value. It is of such high value that even Uddhava is overcome. Uddhava – about whom the Lord says, "You are My most favourite devotee: I love you even more than My own Self." And that Uddhava is aspiring to take birth as a creeper there in Vrndavana. This is not mere hyperbole. When Uddhava is aspiring to be a shrub, to be some grass there, then how are we to prepare ourselves that we shall walk over that place? I shall have to walk over the head of Uddhava! So, how much higher a conception must that place be?

And the *sahajiyas* – they are ridiculous! By imitation, here in the plane of flesh and blood, they think they will achieve that? They are the worst enemies! By imitating in this way, not only are they themselves going to hell, but they are attracting so many others there as well. They are not conscious of the facts – of 'what is what'. So they have got their hated position in society; the general society has got hate for them, those *babajis*.

But we have to put faith in our Guru Maharaj who said, "It is my misfortune. I could not find a single Vaisnava in this *Vraja-mandal."* Pressing his hand to his forehead he said, "It is my misfortune that I could not find a single Vaisnava in this great, holy place of *Vraja-mandala*." That was his conclusion.

And after he had performed *Vraja-mandala-parikrama*, he said about one *babaji,* who was generally recognized as the best of the *Sahajiya Vaisnavas* as their leader: "He is a *kanistha-adhikari*. He may be considered as a beginner – to have admission into the infant class." That man was considered unanimously as a *siddha-babaji* – to have attained the highest position among them. Yet Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur said, "He has got admission into the primary class." In writing – in the *Gaudiya-patrika* newspaper, he stated this. And we are trained accordingly and consciously – not with blind faith. He explained to us what is what; we tried to follow his direction and we have also come to such conclusions.

Step by step we must approach the highest point mental concoction, imitation. Imitation is the worst. It is hateful – filthy. If in the name of that highest love, we represent this fleshy concoction with the body and the mind – then that is the most hateful thing. We must try to avoid it with our utmost will and energy.

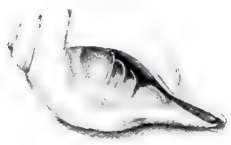
Srila Kaviraj Goswami describes, *vaikunthera prithivy-adi sakala cinmaya* – the elements of that *Vaikuntha* world are all-spiritual and the scientific survey of that land is possible to the soul's eye. We must understand that – how it is true. And for that we must first understand what is the *tatastha* region: what is *viraja*, what is *brahmaloka*.
But we are in such a material position that we cannot even understand this lower process:

indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah
manasas tu para buddhir, buddher yah paratas tu sah
Bhagavad-gita 3.42

"What is the soul? We cannot follow. We cannot understand what is our own soul. There is the world – we conceive it. We perceive it through our senses so they must be higher. The mind receives the experience of the world through the senses. Above the mind is the faculty of judgment within us. Above that is the soul proper. And then we approach the Super-soul area – through *viraja*, *brahmaloka* and eventually we reach *Vaikuntha*." There are so many layers to cross, but who is to cross? – Our own soul. We cannot even find him – our own soul! We are far away from that conception in a hopeless position. Then we say the highest conception of the *Paramatma* world is in our fist? That is heinous!
First we must feel our own soul. What is our real existence? What is the identity of our spiritual position? Then, that soul will have to go higher and higher. By crossing more and more valuable planes he must go up. But first he must feel his own identity.

So, the *sahajiyas*, the imitationists, should be considered the enemy. Like Quisling (a famous Norwegian Army officer of the second world war who sold out to the Nazis), they are *jana-satru*, the enemy who has sprung up at home – the enemy within. This kind of imitation is the worst. Ordinary imitation may be bad, but imitation of the Highest Reality is repugnant and must be rejected because what is Supreme is being exploited in such a low, mean way. That is *sahajiya*.

We cannot see our own soul. That is our position. Absorbed in this gross matter of exploitation we cannot even know what is our mind – of what substance it is made. Then, how can one understand what is intelligence, *buddhi*, the faculty of judgment within us, or beyond that, the soul – or ultimately, the realm of the Super-soul?
Yet we are living in the mundane world and imagining, "I have got the Lord of my dreams. I have got it all within my fist!"



Chapter Fifteen

Knowledge which is not to be abandoned

Sometimes we may be misguided, led to believe that we must not study the devotional books. Therefore we may think, "To analyze, to know – that is not part of devotion. That is not necessary: It is knowledge, *jnana*, that is anti-devotional."

Thinking in this way, we shall go on taking the Holy Name, and wherever there is some explanation being given about the devotional school, we shall try to avoid it. But that is not always best, because by hearing from the proper source, we get the kind of knowledge that gives us impetus to go on in our *sadhana*.
In *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*, Srila Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami says, *siddhanta baliya*, we should discuss the *siddhanta* (perfect conclusions of devotion).

Sanatana Goswami is the *acharya* of *siddhanta*. One may challenge, "What is the necessity of knowing *siddhanta* – what is what? I shall go on chanting the Name and wherever there is any class being given to explain *Srimad Bhagavatam* or *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*, I shall avoid it. That is knowledge: *jnane prayasam udapasya* – 'One should totally abandon the unnecessary endeavour of gaining knowledge by discussing empirical philosophical Truths.'" (*Srimad Bhagavatam 10.14.3*)

But the *jnana* mentioned in this verse does not describe that sort of knowledge that gives us a real conception of what is the devotee, and what is God. That 'knowledge' appears similar to *jnana* externally, but if it is coming from a genuine source, it is another type – another substance.
The warning about *jnana* is given because anyone may give any kind of interpretation of the revealed scriptures. It is not that we should try to know anything and everything – whatever anyone will say we shall run there to learn something. But when there is any revelation coming through a real agent who is higher than us, we should be very earnest to hear. That will consolidate our position and help us to go on – to progress in our *sadhana*.

Knowledge which is Bhakti-siddhanta

We should not reject as 'knowledge' the following *siddhanta*: Who is Krsna and how is He *svayam-bhagavan*; who is Narayana; where are the 24 layers of misconception; where is Vaikuntha, Goloka; who is Baladeva; what are the different *rasas*.
If I say, "Oh, no – this is all *jnana*; dismiss it and take the Name." That is foolishness. It should be considered as indolence or idleness. We should invite that knowledge which will enhance our faith more profoundly. One should welcome such discussions. The Lord Himself says:

mad citta mad-gata-prana, bodhayanatah parasparam
kathayantas ca mam nityam, tusyante ca ramanti ca
Bhagavad-gita 10.9

"The thoughts of My pure devotees dwell in Me, their lives are fully devoted to My service, and they derive great satisfaction and bliss always enlightening one another and conversing about Me."

In the association of *sadhus*, to discuss about Him from different standpoints is not 'knowledge' to be abandoned; rather, it should spontaneously and naturally be encouraged. It is called *istha-gosthi*: *gosthi* means 'combination' and *istha* means 'desirable company'. In that association, we must talk about Him. That is a necessary part of devotion.

And when *bhava-bhakti* (true devotional feeling) awakens, automatically these things will come:

ksantir avyartha-kalatvam viraktir mana-sunyata
asa-bandhah samutkantha nama-gane sada rucih
asaktis tad-gunakhyane pritis tad vasati-sthale
ityadayo 'nubhavah syur jata-bhavankure jane
Bhakti-rasamrta-sindhu 1.2.25/26

"When the need of ecstatic emotion for Krsna fructifies in the heart of a devotee, the following symptoms naturally manifest in his behaviour. He feels forbearance; he doesn't like to waste any time; he is detached from the mundane; he is free from pride; he lives in full hope; he is always eager to serve; he always has a taste for chanting the Lord's Name, he loves to tell of the divine qualities of the Lord; he loves the Holy Abode of the Lord. These nine are called *anubhava* – subordinate signs of ecstatic love."

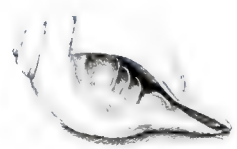
If a *sadhu* spontaneously out of his own accord is expressing so many qualities of Krsna, and we go away, losing the benefit of that – it is suicidal. Rather, we need attachment for that – *asaktih*. "Oh, the good qualities of Krsna are being explained through this agent; I must try to give my ear to that."

Otherwise, why has the ear been created? It has been created only to receive tidings of Him. The ear and the brain have been created for that purpose only and both must have their fulfilment in *krsna-katha, hari-katha*. What is the purpose of *Gita*? The *Bhagavata*? What is *maya*? What is *svarupa-sakti*? What is real knowledge and what is misconceived, apparent 'knowledge'? All these things we must know to a certain extent because to avoid what is undesirable and to accept what is desirable presupposes some sort of knowledge at every step of our progress.

Jnane prayasam udapasya, to abandon fruitless knowledge-seeking does not mean that we must not talk about Krsna amongst ourselves or that when a *sadhu* is explaining about the Lord's *nama, rupa, guna, lila* (names, forms, qualities and pastimes) then we should flee from that place. It is not like that. By *jnana* – in the sense used here – is meant the teachings of *sankhya* of the following: atheist Kapila; schools of Patanjali *yoga*; Jaimini (*karma-mimamsa*); the Buddhist school, etc.
The advice to avoid them is also meant for the beginner but the preacher will have to come in contact with everything – to relegate them to their proper place.

And also sometimes *jnana*, knowledge which is necessary, can come from within. There is a stage of devotion when the necessary knowledge comes from within automatically. There is a stage of *bhakti* where things occur in this way – it is revelatory. Through revelation we can understand. It comes without any study, being supplied internally by *caitya-guru*. Sometimes knowledge of devotion may come to help us; but generally it will be by hearing from the lips of the devotees.

So the plane, the conception of Krsna in Vrndavan, is not lacking in *cit*, in knowledge. *Cit* means *cetana*, that is consciousness – "to know". It is not in want of grandeur and awe such as is found in *Vaikuntha*. But when *ananda* takes precedence over *cit*, then it is advised, "Don't endeavour much through knowledge." There is *sat-cit-ananda* and by *cit*, by the faculty of knowing and understanding, we cannot achieve everything. But everything comes automatically to us by service. In service, there is also knowledge – a department of knowledge – and that develops automatically.



Chapter Sixteen

The Ontology of Spiritual Struggle

When a devotee is trying to conquer his senses – when he is trying to conquer the influences of *kama, krodha, lobha, moha, mada, matsarya* (lust, anger, greed, madness, illusion and envy) – at that time, he cannot avoid a struggle. Progress means a struggle of different kinds and that happens in the stage of *madhyama-adhikara*. Generally, that is the time of difficulties. In *kanistha-adhikara*, in the lower stage, one does not concern himself with the stage of his progress, i.d., if he is getting devotion or not. With a peaceful mind, he is engaged in *archana* (deity worship) or whatever may be his service. But when the stage of *madhyama-adhikara* commences, a real struggle begins in one's life. He will have to adjust many things, *laukiki vaidhiki vapi*, not only regarding his devotional life as inculcated in the scriptures (*vaidhiki*), but also his social position (*laukiki)* – his ordinary dealings, his quarrels and his relationships with society and education.

Usually, the tendency to preach comes in this stage; he wants to extend himself to try to remove the difficulties in the environment and convert it to his purpose. The *madhyama-adhikara's* life is one of struggle. And when he reaches *uttama-adhikara*, then he becomes peaceful. He sees that everywhere things are going well according to the will of Krsna. He can see the will of Krsna very easily and that His backing is everywhere. So he has not much to do or to struggle for.

sarva-bhutesu yah pasyed bhagavad-bhavan atmanah
bhutani bhagavaty atmany esa bhagavatottamah
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.2.45

"On the topmost platform of devotional service, one sees within everything, the Soul of all souls, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krsna. He sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord and understands that everything that exists is eternally situtated within the Lord."

But when one is living in the plane of ignorance (of misconception) it is necessary for him to find harmony because he is seeing both things – *maya* and *isvara*. He wants to install *isvara* – God, Godliness, God-consciousness – and he tries his hardest to remove misconception. Therefore, *madhyama-adhikara* is a period of struggle; it is in the stage of *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of spiritual practice.

Sadhana-dasa – the Stage of Spiritual Struggle

As a result of *sukrti* – spiritual fortune due to devotional service rendered knowingly or unknowingly – the soul first acquires *sraddha*, divine faith. Then with *sadhu-sanga*, one gets the association of the real devotees. That is the stage of hearing, *sravana-dasa*, then *varana-dasa*, one accepts the principle, the teachings, the path of devotion; then comes *sadhana-dasa*, the stage of practice and this stage is full of struggle. Then, in the *apana-dasa* stage of advanced realization, one feels peaceful in *bhava-bhakti*, pure love of God.

And again, when he is already in lila, situated in the transcendental pastimes, there is another struggle but that is of another kind. In *Vraja, Vrndavan*, there is also competition, a struggle, Yasoda will think, "How to control this naughty child? I fail to do so. I cannot manage Him!" – there is struggle. Still, that is produced by *yoga-maya*. It comes in *prema-bhakti, ahi bhavati premna*, and it is dynamic in character – not static. Where the plane is dynamic, there must be struggle. In some way or other, it is present as competition in the plane of *lila*.
In the *sakhya-rasa*, there is play where there are two parties; on one side is Krsna; on the other side is Balaram. Each wants to be victorious. That is also a struggle but purely of another character, from another domain – it is transcendental play.

In *madhurya-rasa* there are several parties as well. Here is Radharani's party; there is Chandravali's party and so many others and the servitors of each party have to manage for their own interest – the interest of their mistress. Dynamic character means a kind of struggle –a sweet struggle. In this world there is also a struggle, but it is bitter. When we have to struggle to remove nescience and invite real science – to go from misunderstanding to pure knowledge in the beginning stages – that struggle is very bitter. It is not only tasteless, but also sometimes painful. But when we enter the higher realm, the struggle becomes more or less sweet.

The Struggle in the Kama-Rupa Group

Lila must mean a kind of struggle. There are differences; there is conquering. Sometimes they are taking the help of deception – one party is deceiving the other. However, everything is *aprakrta, prakrta-vat,* super-transcendental though it appears just like ordinary worldly affairs.

As well, something like immorality is there; *niti rahita*, the moral laws are being crossed for the satisfaction of Krsna. This is a very high conception: to do anything and everything for Him. The *kama-rupa* group is prepared to do anything and everything for Krsna and for that kind of service, they are under no law. Krsna is the origin and master of law, and for Him anything can be done crossing the existing laws of society.

ajnayaivam gunan dosan mayadistan api svakan
dharman santyajya yah sarvan mam bhajeta sa ca sattamah
Srimad Bhagavatam 11.11.32

Those who are ready to cross even the *sastric* orders, which have been given to us for our own benefit, for the service of Krsna, are really the highest class of devotee. Law, which has been established by the Lord, is for the ordinary people; however, a special section exists who are ready to cross over that law only for their exclusive service to the Lord.

sarva-dharman parityajya, mam ekam saranam vraja
aham tvam sarva-papebhyo, moksayisyami ma sucah
Bhagavad-gita 18.66

"Totally abandoning all kinds of religion, surrender exclusively unto Me. I will liberate you from all kinds of sins, do not despair."

Many rules and rites of *varnasrama-dharma* are given for our benefit, but that is when we are in lower stage. And in the higher stage, "crossing the law, I shall serve Him" – that is faith! Suppose it is forbidden to enter the harem of the king; the general law states that it is forbidden to all and none should transgress that. But if one perceives some urgent service is necessary, if he suspects there is some danger to the king's life and crosses the law at his own risk entering the harem for the benefit of the king – to save him from an intruder – he is an honoured servant. Similarly, there is this particular section of devotees who are ready to cross over the law for the Lord's satisfaction. Those who can know the interest of Krsna are a special group; they are highest among the devotees. Law is meant for the general public, but the sweet will of Krsna is above all law.

Where there is life, there is struggle; where there is progress, there is struggle; where there is *lila*, play, there is struggle, though of a different kind. One is sweet, the other painful. In the lower stage it is a little painful for us to cut the tie of attraction to this world; but when some permanent relationship is established with the upper world – when we have regained that – then to move forward is happy. Since progress means a struggle, that struggle will continue throughout the whole stage of *madhyama-adhikara*.

Then, in *uttama-adhikara*, externally the life may become peaceful. And again, in the higher stage, in *vilasa* (pastimes), crossing *santa-rasa* which is a peaceful stage, again the struggle begins but that is a sweet struggle. It is arranged not by *maha-maya* but by *yoga-maya* – it is carrying us to the centre. The very land there is of *rasa*; it is *rasamaya*, full of sweet taste, the land of nectar – *amrtamaya-loka*. The difference between the two kinds of struggle is something like the experience of a man working in a hot desert or in a good, healthy atmosphere – or the work of a diseased man and that of a healthy man.

There is an expression, "Ignorance is bliss." One who is in ignorance is living in peace because he does not know anything – he is unconscious. That is also peaceful because there is no consciousness so, no pain. When a patient is in pain, the doctor wants to render him unconscious by some injection. That unconsciousness is ignorance and it also has some kind of a taste, *tama-guna*. But that is not real peace. There is no feeling – it is zero. But zero is also of an infinite character. Infinity and zero are similar. If we add zero to zero, it comes to zero. If we subtract zero from zero it is also zero; zero divided by zero again zero. In the same way, if infinity is added to, subtracted from or divided by infinity, it all comes to infinity. So, 'ignorance is bliss'. If there is no consciousness, there is no question of pain. It is like the existence of a stone. The extreme liberationists reach such a stage as that of a fossil or a stone. They want peace so much, they are granted a stone-like state of peace.

ye 'nye 'ravindaksa vimukta-maninas
tvayy asta-bhavad avisuddha-buddhavah
arhya krcchena param padam tatah
patanty adho 'nadrta-yusmad anghrayah
Srimad Bhagavatam 10.2.32

"Oh Lotus-eyed Lord, although non-devotees who accept severe penances and austerities to achieve the higher position may think themselves liberated, their intelligence remains impure. They simply speculate in various ways and do not seek the means to take shelter of You. Because they have no regard for Your lotus feet, they simply fall down from their position of imagined superiority into material existence again."

To those who are determined to be 'one' with Him, this heavy punishment is finally given and they are thrown down to take such an existence – that of a stone. In such a state, they can live in peace for lakhs, crores or millions of years. They can become the Himalayas, a stone or a tree. In the *Puranas* we find examples of personalities who were cursed to such a fate and in that state, there is also a sort of peace – 'ignorance is bliss.'

And those who have gone up to *santa-rasa*, they also find some peace. But entering *Vaikuntha*, again there is movement and that is for service. In *dasya-rasa* there is activity – there is struggle. They are serving the order, "Do this, go here, give this to them." There is so much movement and movement means struggle but that struggle brings peace. That kind of struggle begins in *dasya-rasa*. And *santa-rasa* is the marginal position and in that position of non-activity, there is also peace but it is of a lower quality.

atmaramas ca munayo, nirgrantha-apy urukrame
kurvanty ahaitukim bhaktim, ittham-bhuta-guno harih
Srimad Bhagavatam 1.7.10

"All varieties of *atmaramas* (those who take pleasure in the *atma* or spiritual self), especially those established on the path of self-realization, though freed from all kinds of material bondage, desire to render unalloyed devotional service unto the Personality of Godhead. This means that the Lord possesses transcendental qualities and therefore, can attract everyone including even liberated souls."
That is the marginal position. It is only on the threshold of service proper:

brahma-bhutah prasanatma, na socati na kanksati
samah sarvesu bhutesu, mad-bhaktim labhate param
Bhagavad-gita 18.56

"The spotlessly pure-hearted and self-satisfied soul who has attained to his conscious divine nature neither grieves nor craves for anything. Seeing all beings equally, he gradually achieves supreme devotion, *prema-bhakti,* unto Me."

So, the marginal position is a position of so-called peace. But we find dynamic "peace in struggle" as it appears externally in *dasya, sakhya* and *vatsalya-rasa* as well as in *madhurya-rasa* and its subdivisions, *svakiya* and *parakiya*. Suppose the *madhurya-rasa* servitors are to meet with Krsna on a dark night in the forest. On the surface it appears they have to struggle in so many ways. Being given the sign, hearing the particular flute-song of Krsna, they will have to pass through the jungle to be somewhere at a particular time. That appears like an ordinary struggle, but it is the sweetest movement.

If 'struggle' means 'movement', then there, on that plane, where movement is so sweet, struggle is a high thing. But if we think that struggle means something painful, then that struggle must be of the lower plane. Here struggle is pain producing; all movement, all endeavours here, produce only pain. On the higher plane, there is also movement, but that movement produces sweetness, just as sandalwood when rubbed, produces a sweet scent. There is struggle for the purpose of producing sweetness.

The Sweetest Songs tells the Saddest Tales

On the highest level, they are also very busy struggling. But that struggle is producing nectar that they taste. To struggle also means to be busy; everyone there is so busy – more that we can ever conceive. They are so active but their activity is not painful – it produces peace. Here, trying to do away with our unholy attraction to the mundane, we experience a painful struggle. But as the English poet Shelly wrote, "Our sweetest songs tell of the saddest thought." That kind of struggle also gives us peace. When a beginner in devotion starts to become detached from his mundane environment, then to leave it is painful but he also gets a kind of peace.

yad anucarita-lila-karna-piyusa-viprut
sakrd adana-vidhuta-dvandva-dharma vinastah
sapadi grha-kutumbam dinam utsrjya dina
bahava iha vihanga bhiksu-caryam caranti
Srimad Bhagavatam 10.47.18

A devotee leaves his family and his family is crying and wailing; he also feels pain because of their anguish. But still he feels a kind of peace of a higher quality so he can bear the apparent pain of separation from his family life. When he is giving up his home and his family, he feels some painful reaction – but beyond that, in his heart of hearts, he feels some bright prospect. When a man goes to a foreign country to earn some money, he leaves his family and so he feels some pain, but at heart he also realizes that he is going to bring in money that will satisfy him and enable him to enjoy.

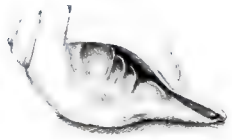
In a similar way, when a person goes to leave this world, his association with misconception, apparently, or outwardly, he feels pain on account of what he is doing. But at heart, he gets some hope of a bright future. With that strength, he can go on.
So, when we have some attraction for this mischievous world and we try to leave it, at that stage we struggle – a painful struggle. But still, beyond that, we see a bright hope of some unparalleled nectarine taste of life.

So struggle does not always mean pain. Up to a certain stage it is painful and that is due to *maya* – misconception. And we find also the symptoms of pain in *Krsna-lila,* but that is not real pain. It is apparent pain; it only seems so. Krsna said that He would come to a particular *kunja* and Radharani with Her party went there but He did not come. That is called *kalahatarita* – mistiming – that is, being let down by the lover or beloved. And there are so many other situations, like *mana* (jealousy). All things are painful, but as Krsnadas Kaviraj Goswami writes, describing *Krsna-prema; bahya visa-jvala haya, bhitare anandamaya,*

externally there appears to be great pain but the heart is overflowing with blissfulness. So, "The sweetest songs are those which tell of our saddest thoughts."
Externally it is sad, but internally it is sweet.

When we take the Name, in the beginning we think it our duty to count so many rounds and sometimes it is painful. But when we get a taste for the Name, then our inner tendency incites us to take the Name more and more – not that as a duty we will somehow have to finish sixteen rounds. When we acquire *ruci*, inner taste for that particular service, it is happy. Until and unless we acquire that position, there must be some pain.

As long as we do not have that taste and we are doing that service as a duty, we will feel some pain. So *sadhana-dasa* is a little painful on the whole. Then in *apana-dasa* – it becomes sweet. Underground, of course, sweetness is everywhere; otherwise why should a person be tempted to approach the spiritual path? It can be only for the hope of sweetness. But still, if we want to see by analysis, then the process is: *sravana-dasa*, hearing; then *varana-dasa*, accepting; then *sadhana-dasa*, practicing. Up to this point it is a little painful. Then *apana-dasa*, realized devotion; and finally *prapanna-dasa*, full self-surrender. And what pain exists is only apparent; substantially it is All-Sweet.



Chapter Seventeen

Caught Within A Subtle Storm

The Prejudice of our Past Experience

Caught within – a subtle storm has covered with dust the eye of our soul. Our inner vision densely covered with dust is born from many different misconceptions of separate interest, causing us to ignore the universal interest. This mental cover produced from prejudices of provincial interests keeps us from seeing reality.

visaya-dhulite kemane se paratattva paiya dekhite

"How will a person be able to read the universal wave when his mind is fully engrossed with local interest of different kinds? How can one detect the universal interest – the universal wave? Only one who has fully eliminated all kinds of local interest and is eager to understand the universal wave. He can see it clearly."

Arthesv abhijnah svarat: what is the purpose of the movement of this world? The answer is clear – it is "For itself". Reality is for itself – not to satisfy many but to satisfy One. All the waves are meant to satisfy that One, and if we can put ourselves on that level we can understand the truth; otherwise not – in which case, we engage in thievery.

We are far from the truth when we cannot see that everything – all waves are flowing towards the satisfaction of the One – *svayam bhagavan.* We are labouring under a deception, we are deceivers who are not just deceiving ourselves but the world as well. Everyone – all the *baddha-jivas* are more or less cheaters. That is our position and we must be relieved of such misunderstanding, self-deception and environmental cheating if we are to be placed in our proper position.

How to Read Within Myself?

Thereafter we may go there and find that universal wave - actually see it – have darsan. *Darsan* means 'to see'; but how to see? That must be learned. What to see? How to read what is going on within myself and outside myself? That is proper understanding – proper education. A proper understanding of one's own self as well as the environment is proper education. That education must be *Vedic*. The standard must be drawn from outside this area of *maya* – this area of misunderstanding; the standard must be drawn from the perfect realm through *Veda* – revealed truth.

We must accept revealed truth and bid farewell to so-called scientific knowledge and other kinds of perceptions that are all erroneous – based on false experience and false information. "It belongs to me; it belongs to him; it belongs to them." This calculation is all false. We have to get wholesale relief from this mania!

And what's more, we must not only get relief from this misconception, from misunderstanding the external waves, but we must attain a positive position – to learn to

understand the wave, the vibration of *Goloka. Goloka* is the most universal, most fundamental plane. If we can harmonize ourselves with that plane, we will be led to *Vrndavan* or *Nabadwip* and there, we shall see things as they are.

Some are more attracted to *Krsna-lila*; others are more attracted to *Gaura-lila* and others have an inclination to be accommodated in both places. In *Krsna-lila* also, some are attracted to Radharani's camp, some to Krsna's camp and some are holding the middle position. We find this kind of diversity – divisions, and that is necessary for the *lila* by the arrangement of *yoga-maya*. So in the highest plane, we find two kinds of pastimes: *Krsna-lila* and *Gaura-lila* and they are each of the same value. In one there is transaction within a 'limited camp' and in the other, there is transaction along with a tendency towards distribution to others. But they are of the same value. That which is being distributed and is being enjoyed, are one and the same value of ecstasy, sweetness, love and beauty. Some are more attracted to the one *lila* and some are more attracted to the other. Within *Gaura-lila*, we also find those like Narahari Sarkara and his followers who were more given to Krsna than Gauranga, and others who are more inclined towards Gauranga than to Krsna. This is all by the grant of the Lord, the Supreme Will – His *lila*.

In *Gaura-lila*, Gadadhara Pandit is holding the helm – everything belongs to him. Still, he has to admit, he has been dispossessed – that Gauranga has taken everything! He is exhaustively dedicated to Gauranga. So Srila Kaviraja Goswami says: *teho laksmi-rupa, tara sama keha nai*, that he represents the main potency of Gauranga, and no one is to be compared to him. This is the conclusion of Srila Kaviraja Goswami about Sri Gadadhara. He is *gaura-prema-maya*, the embodiment of Sri Gaura's love.

Gadadhara Das represents the halo of Radharani but Gadadhara Pandit represents Her mood, Her nature – Her heart. It is as if Mahaprabhu has taken away Gadadhara Pandit's soul and the body is still standing. That is the position of Gadadhara Pandit; he is quite empty and following Mahaprabhu. He is not full in himself. Something, the most important thing, is his heart has been taken away by Mahaprabhu. He has no other alternative but to follow Him. He is wholly given to Mahaprabhu. Gadadhara Pandit's position, the part he played, was something like that of Radharani. Her heart was stolen by Krsna – the empty body still standing. *Radha-bhava-dyuti-subalita naumi Krsna-svarupam:* He was fully engrossed in the conception of Sri Gauranga. Gauranga had taken everything from him so he had no other alternative. He was fully engrossed – completely captured by Him.

The Predominated Moiety of the Whole

We find his activity throughout his whole life was like this. Of the other devotees, some were ordered to go to *Vrndavan*. Still others were allowed to go there, but though Gadadhar Pandit wanted to visit *Vrndavan* with Mahaprabhu Himself, he was denied: "No, you wont' go."

When Jagadananda Pandit asked to go there, Mahaprabhu, with hesitation, granted him permission, "Yes, go there, but move always under the guidance of Rupa and Sanatana." He also gave him some special instructions: "Do this, and this, and don't do that." But Gadadhara Pandit was not allowed to go there.

He was the representation of Srimati Radharani Herself, yet his peculiar position was such: the Queen of *Vrndavana*, but now transferred to *Nabadwip*. His position had become just the opposite; he could not enter *Vrndavan*! He prayed for permission, but Mahaprabhu did not give it. He said, "No, stay and live here." And he had to do so. Sri Gadadhar Pandit represents the predominated moiety of the Whole. The Whole consists of predominating and predominated moieties, and he represents the predominated half. He is one half of the Absolute Truth.

In the teachings of Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur, whose preaching was inspired by Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Sriman Mahaprabhu, we also find all the substance that is present in that plane of vibration. These two personalities, Sri Gadadhara Pandit and Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakura, are our great *Gurus* – our guides. By offering worship to them we can sow the seed of our highest benefit. By the grace of that great Guru Maharaj, Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Goswami Prabhupad, we have been able to understand this.

And Bhaktivinod Thakur, though generally has his own position as understood from the consideration of the disciple, Prabhupad Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur has seen Srimati Radharani in him: a 'relative' vision. He once said that, "Radharani represents the full play of *asta-nayika*" – the eight characteristics of the heroine. We see that they are all perfectly represented in Her. In other places we may find partial representations of them, but we find them fully manifest only in Her.
He said, "I see my *Gurudeva* as Guna-manjari and in that *manjari* form, he has some partial representation of Radharani. But if I attempt to look more deeply, I find him identified fully with Her; the eight kind of qualities displayed in the service of Krsna (*asta-nayika*) are to be found there. If I look at him with my head a little more erect, I can see that he is one with Radharani. *Acharyam mam vijaniyat*: know the *Acharya* as Myself. If I give more attention to this *sastric* rule and try to search out the meaning, I find that Radharani comes to take Her place there, in the position of my *Gurudeva*." In this way he has seen in Bhaktivinoda Thakur the fullest representation of the cult of Sri Gauranga.

Continuous Pastimes in Nabadwip-Dham

This realization is expressed in his poem where he says that he saw Svarup Damodar Goswami in Gaura Kisora Das Babaji Maharaj, and Sri Gadadhar Pandit in Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. In one place he has written: *gadadhara-din dhari paiyacche gaura-hari*, that he has accepted the day of the disappearance of Srila Bhaktivinoda Thakur to be identified with that of Sri Gadadhar Pandit. In another place, in his poem at the conclusion of his *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta* commentary, he has written. "Here in *Nabadwip-Dham*, the eternal pastimes are going on continuously: only those who have obtained that deep vision can perceive it.

gadadhara mitra-vara, sri svarupa damodara
sada kala gaura-krsna yahe
jagatera dekhi'klesa, dhariya bhiksuka-vesa
aharahah krsna-nama bhaje

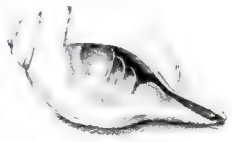
sri gaura icchaya dui, mahima ki kava mui
aprakrta parisada-katha

prakasa haiya seve, krsna-gaurabhinna-deve
aprakasya katha yatha tatha

He says, "It is very difficult to perceive the sweet will of Sri Gauranga but, if we can lift ourselves up to that level, we see that Svarupa Damodara Goswami and Sri Gadadhar Pandit are always engaged in their service here in *Nabadwip*. Sometimes it is suppressed and sometimes it is appearing on the surface. In that plane, all is going on by the sweet will of Sri Gauranga – without any restriction. But now I find that those two have appeared on the surface as Srila Gaura Kisor Das Babaji and Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. I have seen it with my own eye of divine service but this is not to be advertised – not to be given publicly anywhere and everywhere. People will laugh at it. But this is my heartfelt conclusion." He has written this in his poem concluding his commentary on *Sri Chaitanya-charitamrta*.

Sri Garadhar Pandit was identified with Srila Bhaktivinod Thakur. That was the vision of our *Gurudeva*, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur. He could see in them the same identity. He considered *siksa-guru-parampara* to be the most substantial thing.

"Eliminating the *sahajiya-vada* which gives much importance to the outer cover, try to look within and see things more deeply. Try to understand the deeper vibrations of the outside environment and see within yourself as well. Dive deep and you will find the plane of the finest vibratiosn which will carry that news to you and you shall see the Truth."



Chapter Eighteen

Conclusion

Corridors of The Load-Stone

Please listen attentively to what I shall explain. In a scientific way I shall try to explain the subject to you in general – independent of all religious conceptions.
First of all we are to understand that there are three planes of life:

1. The plane of mundane enjoyment
2. The plane of renunciation
3. The plane of dedication.

The plane of enjoyment is where we are presently, more or less. Mundane enjoyment means exploitation; and without exploitation, none can exist in this plane. Everything is full of life: creepers, grass, and tress also have life, but without exploitation and killing other forms of life, none can maintain their body here.
The material world is the plane of exploitation and, as Newton's third law says, "to every action there is an equal and opposite reaction." By exploitation one takes a loan; to clear that loan one will have to go down. In this way there are so many souls going up and down, up and down due to action and reaction in the plane of exploitation. Society is trying to exploit to the utmost; everywhere there is the attempt to live at the cost of others. Without it, life is impossible in this arena because this is the plane of exploitation.

The Buddhists and so many others are trying to get out of this entanglement of exploitation and find a life where there is no exploitation, no action and reaction. To avoid action and reaction they try to find a position of renunciation, and they come to a conception similar to dreamless sleep, that of a *samadhi* or *nirvana*: to withdraw completely from the objective world and to remain in the subjective plane. Without allowing their feelings to move into the lower plane, they always keep a subjective position, and that is something like dreamless sleep.

The theistic section, however, is of the opinion that there is another world; the world of dedication. That dedication is just the opposite of exploitation. In the mundane plane every unit wants to exploit the environment, but in the plane of dedication, every unit wants to serve the environment; and not only the environment, but the real key to the life of that plane is to serve the Centre. We are living in an organic whole, so every point must be true to the organic Centre.
There is a central point that by knowing, everything is known, by attaining which, everything is attained. The long and short of the entire advice of the sacred scriptures is to try to find out that Centre. In the beginning some may think this to be ludicrous claim: "By knowing One, everything is known! What is this? Only a madman can say such a thing!"

To clarify this point, an analogy is given in the ancient scriptures: when you pour water onto the root of a tree, the whole tree is nourished and if you put food into the stomach, the whole body is fed. Similarly, if you do service to the Centre, everything is served. It is possible but in order to accomplish this we have to enter the plane of dedication. Avoiding both the plane

of exploitation and also that of renunciation, you should try to enter the plane of dedication. The *atma* – that is you, the soul proper – is a member of that plane. That is the real world whereas this material world is the perverted reflection.

You are not a Member of this Dying World

So do away with the animal consciousness that consumes you – that you are flesh and blood. You are not limited to flesh and blood! You are a conscious unit and you will not die. You are not a member of this dying world, where everything is sure to die on account of its misidentification. This is forced upon you – 'you must die, you must become infirm, you must be born, you must suffer from disease'. But all these are the fault of misidentification of your self with your body. This is animal consciousness: consciousness that you are an animal. But you are not so. You are a conscious unit, you are spirit, you are soul!

Not only is the soul immortal, not only does God exist, not only is He the Absolute Reality and Supreme Consciousness – but we ourselves are units of that conscious world. As spiritual sparks, our souls are eternally connected with the Supreme. God is compared to the sun, and from Him innumerable souls emanate, like particles of light coming from the sun. The particles of light can never be considered the same as the sun. There is an eternal difference. But the particles of light are eternally connected with the sun and possess the same qualities in a minute degree. Like that, all souls are eternally connected with the Supreme. In quality they are similar, yet in quantity there is an eternal difference. This eternal difference makes room for a loving exchange between all souls and God. This is the happy plane of life, where everything is moving in divine harmony.

So separate yourself eternally from that mania, from that misconception and false identification with this material aspect, which is merely the result of your infatuation with illusion. Be reinstated in your glorious position as soul. And how is this possible? You are marginal by constitution, so you cannot stand on your own two feet. You must have some shelter – either mundane within your mundane identification, or above that, you must have some shelter above your head.

According to the result of our *karma* – our previous deeds – we shall be placed in a particular environment. There, the soul takes on a particular bodily form suitable to our *karma*. We must start our spiritual life from wherever we are placed; we must begin our work of conquering all those *samskaras* (mundane tendencies) that comprise the mental and physical encasement we are living in.

Tat te 'nukampam susamiksamano

Nobody but ourselves is responsible for the situations we are placed in. Sometimes it may seem that injustice is being done to us, but really, all that comes to us as a result of our past deeds. We do not always recollect these past deeds however, because it is our nature to forget. When we realize that all that happens to us is due to our own previous actions, we come to the corridor of true liberation.

That is why we should not only live in our present position without complaint, but moreover, we shall have to consider it as really necessary to be spiritually upwardly mobile. In this way, we have to accept whatever adversities come to us as the grace of the Lord. We must cope with this positive angle of vision of goodness: "This is my real necessity. There is no error in the calculation of the Lord. This test has been extended to me for my benefit. To stand, to face and cross this opposition is my chance to have progress in my life. This test has been given by the Lord to facilitate my progressive life." In the scriptures we are advised to face all circumstances in such an optimistic way. Then very easily and swiftly we shall cross these walls of misunderstanding, this *maya* or illusion, and we shall be liberated, and even more, we shall have participation in God consciousness – the life of dedication.

The Absolute Truth is for Himself

The real world is where every unit is dedicating itself to the whole, represented by the Centre, just as in a healthy body every atom will work for the welfare of the whole body. If an atom works for itself, it exploits to the extreme and such local works for local interest are clearly detrimental. Every part of the body, and every atom is to work for the welfare of the whole system. There is a Centre and by the guidance of that Centre, it will work.

What is the position of the Centre? That Absolute Truth, the Prime Cause of everything, must have two qualifications. What are they? It must be by itself and for itself. Please try to pay attention. By itself means that He is His own cause – nothing else created Him. If anything has created Him, that creator will have the primary importance. Therefore, to be the Absolute He must be eternally existing and not created by anything. The Absolute must have this qualification. The next qualification is that the Absolute Truth is for itself. He exists for His own satisfaction, not to satisfy any other. If His existence is to satisfy another entity, then He will be secondary, and they for whose satisfaction He is living will have the prime position.

Therefore, the Absolute must have these two qualifications: He is His own cause, and He exists only to satisfy Himself, to fulfil His own purpose.
The Absolute is by Himself and for Himself. If any straw moves, it moves to fulfill the purpose of the Absolute. Everything – every incident, and whatever happens – must have to be for His satisfaciton. So the real current is His play, His pastimes. Yet we find ourselves guided by separate interest: family interest or country interest or humanitarianism. There is always a clash between innumerable spearate interests and so there is trouble. But we must leave all our so-called special interests, come out from misunderstanding, and try to attain the function of a unit that is active for the case of the whole. We are to remember to be faithful to the Centre. At present all our respective duties are for local interest, but we should give up the local identification of our own interest and merge totally in the interest of the organic whole.

We see that if a military officer takes even three dollars for his own purpose, he is punished. However, if he kills so many for the interest of the country, he is rewarded. Similarly, whatever is done for the satisfaction of the whole is good, but if you do anything for yourself or any local friend, you will be punished in the form of a negative reaction that will come to you some way or other.

Neither exploitation nor renunciation will do. Both exploitation and renunciation are abnormal. The happy life is the life of dedication. In an organic whole the common interest is that everyone must be dedicated to the Centre, and to the Centre means to the whole, and that is proper dedication for the whole.
We are not to put food into the eye, or into the nose, or the ear, or anywhere except the stomach. Then only will it be distributed properly and the whole organism will be healthy. All of us are parts of the whole universe, and our duty is to work for the whole, and that is devotion, dedication, surrender. And how are we to know about that? We will receive help from the revealed scriptures, and from the many saints and agents who are also coming from that plane to bring us into harmony.

Religion of the Highest Harmony

The highest harmony in religion has been given by the great 15th century Indian saint, Sri Chaitanya. He explained devotion on the basis of the *Bhagavad-gita* and the *Srimad-Bhagavatam* – the Indian scriptures understood to be the conclusion of all revealed scriptures. In this way, Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu explained that energy or power is not the highest thing, but knowledge is above it. Knowledge can control power and give a beneficial result. But further, knowledge itself also holds a lower position: above it is love and affection, and that is the highest. Neither knowledge nor power, but only affection can give us fulfillment of life.

Mercy is higher than justice. Justice only exists where there is the necessity of laws and rules, but in the realm of the Absolute Autocrat, who is the Absolute Good, there can be no question of any apprehension about Him. He is Absolute Good, and Absolute Good means Absolute Love and Affection, and that is home. Back to God, back to home.

What is home? It is where we find that we are in the midst of our "well-wishers". If we do not care for our own benefit, there are so many who will take care of us – the whole environment will take care of us, and that is home – the domain of the Absolute. We can enter into His service, the highest position, and thereby see the affection, love, harmony, and beauty that exist there. All these dualities are similar. They constitute the nature of the Prime Cause and Good, and we are to go there. Misusing free will we have somehow been led astray but now we are being called, "Come home, back to God and back to home, the highest position, the land of love."

This is, in general and in short, the sum total that I have presented to you – this is the conception of God-consciousness given in *Bhagavad-gita* and *Srimad-Bhagavatam,* and it is the conception that has been given by Sri Chaitanya. Go to the Centre, use your life for total dedication to the Centre, and the Centre is all above justice. It is 'all-merciful', affectionate, loving, and beautiful. The *Bhagavad-gita* gives a brief overview of all conceptions of religion. That is, exploitation, renunciation, and dedication are the three planes of life, and the soul proper is a member of the land of dedication.

All souls are dedicating units, but somehow, by misusing their partial free will, they have entered into the world of exploitation. Buddha and others want to withdraw from here, to get out of the entanglement of exploitation of action and reaction – by complete retirement. They

have said that after retirement, the soul can live happily. Still, there may be the possibility of again becoming entangled in this trap. But where the free souls really live, in that place all of them are dedicating units. When we want to trace what it is that is harmonizing them and maintaining them in that plane, we shall see that all are working for the whole. And that Whole is represented by the One Absolute Good.

But to understand this, you will have to dive deep, not into the plane of body and mind, but into the plane of soul. You will have to dive deep into the reality that is within us. It is not a foreign thing to be acquired by loan, but the soul is within everyone, even the insects and the trees. So, we have to rise to the plane of soul. Eliminate both your physical and mental encasements and find out your own self. There you will find the key – the clue to the proper world where life is worth living.

If we want to live in that higher domain, we shall have to serve. By 'serving and sacrifice' we go up, and by 'an enjoying spirit' we go down. We are to understand what is exploitation and enjoyment, and what is higher service. Divine service is pure, and in that service there is also a pure type of ecstasy. By giving, we become gainers. By exploiting, we become losers. We are to see all these things and for this vision, the human birth is very valuable. In connection with the *sadhus*, the saints, the agents of divinity – we shall try our best to get out of this entanglement and enter into the land of love, dedication, and affection where every word is a song, every step is a dance, and the flute is the dear-most companion.

Every word is a song, but this is not a sound of this plane. This is from some other world, a world that is so soft, so sweet, so heart-capturing. It is a world where correct behaviour occurs most sweetly and harmoniously. Every word is like a song. Every movement is sweet, like dancing. It has been described in this way. Everything is replete with the highest degree of beauty. This is the land of beauty – there everything is beautiful. Everything has a touch of divine beauty. The Prime Cause is charming, attracting, and arresting heart and soul.

Yes! There is a land of such existence. The Sweet Absolute is there – the Lord of Love is there. Everything there is for His pleasure. But in which way can we attain the divine life? We are to differentiate between the mundane and the divine. We have to examine them in order to accept the divine life.
We also have to understand that God is not an order supplier. If I am sick, I am not to ask, "Oh God, cure my sickness." And if I am poor, I should not only pray, "Oh God, give me money!" Such mercenary connection is not very happy, although it still has some benefit because at least there is recognition of a supernatural power who can do wonders. However, it is better to want God without expecting anything mundane from Him. We must want God – Who is the source of all creation – and we should not want anything else which we may consider valuable in this mundane realm.

We are to depend on Him: "Oh Lord, give me what is good. I am an imperfect being. I do not know what is good and what is bad. Please provide whatever You consider to be good for me." This is an improvement over praying to Him for mundane benefits.
But better than this is to accept the creed of unalloyed service to the highest: "I want You, my Lord, and nothing else." And what will be our connection with Him? Service – "I want only Your divine service."

At the beginning we might think we are being losers, but ultimately we shall gain. Apparantly we are giving ourselves, we are sacrificing our selfish interests, but in the subtle senses we gain thereby. This ontological truth should be appreciated. It is neither a dogma, nor blind faith. It is based on higher unprejudiced reason.

Our aspiration should be for such a life. We can sincerely foster the idea to feel attraction to a life of such a plane where everything is of a musical character. This is the land of *Vrndavan*. This is the land where God is eternally engaged in a sweet play of love with all surrendered souls. *Vrndavan* is so friendly, so sweet, so near to us, and such a "well-wisher" of ours. We are quite at home there – sweet, sweet home. In our innate and innermost existence we are members of that plane. Now we have come out, and we have scattered our consciousness all over the surface. Cover, cover, cover – there are so many layers but they are all dry things. And the substance is within. Eliminating this bodily cover, the mental cover, the egoistic cover – I may enter into the land of *Vrndavan* – the land of love. *Vrndavan* resides within me, and there I can find my friends everywhere. They are my friends and relatives, and they will give me an all-too-pleasing experience – ecstasy.

Sri Chaitanya came with this news for us. "Oh, you are a child of that soil; why do you suffer here, my children, my boys? Why do you suffer? You are a child of that soil, and you are suffering so much, coming in the desert? Your home is so resourceful, so sweet and you are running in the desert? What is this? Come! Leave this poisonous charm, this suicidal charm.

"This so-called charm, *maya*-charm, misunderstanding charm – this is suicidal. Leave this apparent charm! This is poisonous – like a witch. The witch has charmed you here and made you spellbound. Come along with Me! I shall take you to your home which is so very sweet!"

This should be the course of our life, our cherished goal. *Srimad Bhagavatam* tells us this. Home, sweet, sweet home. You are a child of that soil. In one word, that is the goal. Why is that the highest goal? That is your home! This one word, 'home', should be sufficient to attract you.

You are wandering here in a foreign land, but there is your home. You will get home comfort there, and you will not be able to deny that. So, back to God, back to home, back to Godhead.

End